

PROGRESSIVE
THOUGHT

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New-Church Popular Series. [No. 12.]

PROGRESSIVE THOUGHT

ON

GREAT SUBJECTS.

BY

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"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—1 THESS. v. 21.

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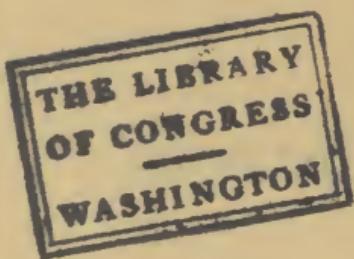
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NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

THE editor of the present volume takes this opportunity to express his gratification at, what seems to him, the excellent example which the writer has set for all who claim to be ministers of the Gospel of our Lord.

The author—as the reader will not fail to notice—has boldly asserted his right and duty to depart from the teachings of a time-honored creed, whenever these are clearly seen to disagree with the teachings of the inspired Word; his right, also, to seek instruction outside of the ordinary channels, or of his own particular denomination, and to read whatever books he finds that help him to a better understanding of the Bible, and of the laws and orderly development of the soul's higher life. For this he is to be warmly commended—and all the more so, because the step is one which, however proper and right in itself, few ministers have had the courage to take.

And not less are the author's church and con-

gregation to be commended for their independence and Christian manliness in standing by their pastor, and upholding and justifying him in his independent course. Let the pews everywhere be as wise and considerate, and the effect of their action would soon be visible in the increased freedom and fearlessness of the pulpit, "progressive thought" would manifest itself more and more, and the signs of a new advent of the Lord to the minds and hearts of men, would rapidly multiply; and thus would the interests of true religion and religious progress be promoted, and the Divine promise, "Behold, I make all things new," would be hastened to its fulfillment on the higher no less than on the lower planes of human thought and action.

B. F. B.

GERMANTOWN, July 17th, 1886.





PREFACE.

MOST people inherit their religious beliefs, as they do their political opinions, from their ancestors. The child naturally follows in the footsteps of his father. He learns to look upon what his father does as right, and to regard what he believes as true. Children are early taught the religious beliefs of their parents, and as dutiful children they accept them without question.

Thoroughly schooled in this or that sectarian belief, as a general rule they grow to riper years in the same faith. True or false, it makes no difference. It is according to what they have been taught, and they know no other religion; or, they believe all other religions to be erroneous. They do not investigate Truth for themselves. They simply accept what they have been taught as the sum total of truth, and seek no further information. They have been taught that it would be impious to do so. It would be casting asper-

sions upon the faith of their parents, and profaning their early instructions.

Men enter the ministry, and preach for years the particular phase of religion in which they were educated, never doubting but that they are preaching the truth according to the Word of the Lord ; when in fact they are proclaiming the dogmas of some particular creed, and seeking to confirm them from the Word. In this way, and by such means, truth is often falsified, and error is confirmed as truth.

One can never know "what is truth" until he is taught of God. When, in humble sincerity, he seeks with all his heart to know the truth, God will not leave him in darkness. It is according to his promise that the Holy Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, shall lead us into all truth, and reveal to us a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. But the mind must first be divested of preconceived and erroneous opinions. God will not reveal to any man a knowledge of his Holy Word, while he seeks to confirm from it the dogmas of men. These must be laid aside, and truth alone must be taught for the truth's sake.

Then the promise of our Lord shall be verified, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” When we are willing to follow where the Lord leads, to receive what He gives, to accept what He teaches, and fearlessly to proclaim what He unfolds to our comprehension, then are we his servants indeed, and then are we free indeed, and in bondage to no man and no body of men.

Of course, it requires a struggle to divest the mind of the influences of early training, and the habits and modes of thought that have shaped and moulded our religious development. But when the Master’s voice is unmistakably heard, bidding us come and learn of Him, and we confer not with flesh and blood, the yoke becomes easy and the burden light. Then for the first time we learn to love truth for its own sake. It becomes sweet to our taste, and more precious than rubies in our experience. The Lord opens our spiritual eyes, and we discern clearly the deep and hidden things of the Spirit. He opens to our view the internal sense of the Word. We thus learn what He means when He says: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words

that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life." (John vi. 63.)

Under the Lord's teaching, the Bible becomes an unsealed Book, whose open pages we read with ever-increasing delight. Its hitherto dry and uninteresting portions become pregnant with meaning, and meaning of deep and absorbing interest. Beneath type, and symbol, and metaphor, and allegory, and parable, we behold the Lord in his Divine glory, and his Church adorned like a bride for her husband.

It is unquestionably the right of every one to investigate truth for himself; and it is not only the privilege but the imperative duty of ministers of the Gospel and students for the ministry, to bring their respective creeds to the light of the Word for comparison, not to confirm error as truth, but to detect error if any exist, and put it away.

The various orthodox creeds were formulated many years ago, when the light of science and of Revelation shone much more dimly than at the present day. Besides, men in those days were no more commissioned of God to publish authoritative standards of religious belief, than

are the men of the Church in this age of the world.

Every minister, and every student preparing for the ministry, should boldly assert his right to test every system of doctrine by the Word, the only Divine standard, and the only rightful authority over the conscience. Neither self-interest nor worldly policy should deter them from putting the creeds of men into the Divine crucible.

Of course, those who love the praise of men more than the praise of God, will not do this; but the true servants of God should seek above all things to honor Him by understanding and *doing* what his Word teaches. They can honor Him in no other way. And He says: “Them that honor me, I will honor.” No fear of ostracism, persecution, or disfellowship should have the weight of a feather in determining their course. We are to seek to please the Lord, not men; for if we seek to please men, we shall not be the servants of Christ.

The Lord is greater than man, and Truth is greater than any man-made creed. Ministers, I know, are expected to teach the dogmas of the creed, and to confine their preaching within its

limits, or withdraw from the people with whom they have been affiliated. But they should do neither, unless the Lord by his providence so orders. They should keep right on preaching the truth more and more faithfully as the Lord reveals it to them, and their people are able to receive it. If, in answer to earnest prayer and long-continued seeking, the Holy Spirit imparts to them clearer light, purer love, and a deeper insight into the precious things of the kingdom, what must be done? A perversion of spiritual truth thus revealed by the Lord, would be blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Silence, when the Lord bids us speak, would be scarcely less blamable. It would be to smother our convictions, disregard the Lord's teachings, and do despite to the spirit of grace. Is it a question whether ministers should obey God or men? Whether they should follow the higher law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus as of supreme authority, or quietly ignore that law that they may keep their own traditions, and obey the doctrines and commandments of men? In the one case the authority of the creed is honored, while God is *dishonored* and his Word made null

and void. In the other the absolute authority of the Word is recognized, and the Lord is glorified by implicit obedience on the part of his ministers, who clearly know that no man and no body of men have the right to fetter the souls and bind the consciences of God's ambassadors with mere human decrees or regulations. The Lord himself declares that we worship Him in vain when we teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

The following discourses are the result of breaking loose from ecclesiastical bondage, and following the guidance of the Lord in the investigation of truth. They are heartily indorsed by a large majority of the Church to which the author ministers. He bespeaks for them a careful and candid perusal, with the mind divested as far as possible of all prejudice and preconceived opinions.

They are not put forth as an exhaustive argument, but as suggesting thought outside of the usual channels. The author has been greatly helped to a clearer understanding of the Bible in its teachings, by a study of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, Clowes, Giles, Barrett, Noble, Madeley, Bayley, Horace Bushnell, E. H.

Sears, and others,—among whom may be mentioned Doughty, Mercer, Farnsworth, and T. S. Arthur. For many years he was blinded by a deep-seated prejudice against Swedenborg and his teachings. He judged and condemned them without a hearing. He utterly refused to investigate their claims, or even to give them a respectful consideration. Finally God took away the prejudice; and never has any other writer so completely lifted the veil that obscured the ineffable glory of the Word. God be praised for the revealed Science of Correspondences, by which the true meaning of the Word—even its spiritual and celestial sense—is made known. It is impossible to describe the joy, and peace, and abiding satisfaction, and holy pleasure, and clear understanding with which the Sacred Scriptures are now contemplated. That similar rich showers of blessing may descend upon all who will candidly and prayerfully read the following discourses, is the author's devout and earnest prayer.

N. F. R.

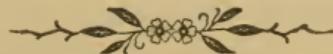
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PROGRESSIVE THOUGHT

ON

GREAT SUBJECTS.

I.

*THE DOCTRINE OF THREE PERSONS IN THE
GODHEAD CONTRARY TO REASON AND REV-
ELATION.*

SCHOOLED in the commonly received doctrines of "orthodox" religion formulated into mere human creeds, and published as the authorized standards of religious belief, I accepted them without question,—even as the oracles of God. For years I preached the gospel according to those standards. It never occurred to me in the earlier years of my ministry that the creed of my Church was not the truth precisely as taught in the Sacred Scriptures. I had inherited all my religious ideas, which were accepted implicitly with the utmost credulity; and those to whom I ministered received my preaching in

the same unquestioning manner. At length I was led to study the Word without the aid of "commentaries," "expository notes," "pulpit helps," or "theological tenets." I wanted to know the TRUTH, and I sought it in the Word alone. Divesting my mind as much as possible of all preconceived notions and theories, I gave my heart to the Lord, and invoked his Holy Spirit to "open my eyes that I might behold wondrous things out of his law." And most graciously did He vouchsafe his Divine illumination.

The foundation of all religion, the doctrine concerning God, claimed the first consideration. The popular theory of the Trinity was contrasted with the plain teaching of the Word. I did not expect to find any want of agreement. I had always supposed the creed of *my Church* and the *Truth* were "one and inseparable." Hence I expected to confirm my faith in the dogmas of my Church, by acquainting myself with the statements of the Word of God.

I had learned from the accepted standards of doctrine that there were three separate and distinct Persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that each Person was very and truly God, possessed of every Divine perfection, infinite, uncreated, and eternal. And yet I was taught that there was only *one God*, whose name was Jehovah, and that these three

infinite and almighty Persons, each of whom was God, constituted that one God. I said to myself, "How can these things be?" How can three separate and distinct Persons constitute one God? The Father as the infinite, eternal, and almighty Jehovah, fills immensity. How, then, can there be room for two other infinite, eternal, and almighty Beings, each one of whom also fills immensity? And if each of these three Persons is really and truly God, how is it that you do not have three Gods? Or how, consistently with sober reason, can you say they are one God? If the Three are one in essence, without body or parts, then what are they as to their Personalities? In the one case, you have an impersonal Deity, which destroys the Divine Personality altogether. In the other, you have three distinct and separate Persons, each of whom is God; hence, three Gods.

Logically, there is no escape from this conclusion. As far as possible, the question is evaded, and the inquirer is put off by one pretext or another; but when this is no longer possible, the whole subject of the Trinity is remanded to the realm of impenetrable mystery, into which the finite mind should not seek to enter.

But this does not satisfy. There is neither wisdom nor knowledge exhibited by religious teachers who thus deal with those that come to

them for instruction. The investigation of old dogmas cannot be put off in this manner.

It is impossible to conceive of an impersonal God, without body or parts, having no form or substance. There is no difficulty in comprehending the revelation of Jesus Christ as "God manifest in the flesh." We can draw near intelligently, and communicate with Him as friend with friend. But in what form is the Father? and in what shape is the Holy Spirit? They are declared in the creeds of men to be separate and distinct Persons, and hence must have separate and distinct forms distinguishable from that of Jesus Christ. He is in fashion and form a man, because He assumed our humanity, and appeared in the material world as a man. And when He glorified that human and made it Divine, He still preserved the human form.

Many admit the existence of a great First Cause operating in the construction of the universe, but they give that Cause no form or personality. But it is absurd to suppose the existence of an almighty Being, of infinite wisdom and knowledge, without form or substance by which He could be distinguished from the various elements of the universe which He has produced, and every part of which He certainly fills with his creative energy. Force is one thing, but the

Intelligence that produces and operates that force, is another.

Electricity, light, and heat are called “forces of nature,” and, operating according to “natural laws,” certain effects are produced. But it would be preposterous to suppose that those forces of nature, operating by means of natural laws, are themselves invested with intelligence and wisdom. They were powerless to build the world, or construct the universe, or exhibit design, or show the relation of means to ends, or cause to effect. The infinite Designer, who is Himself the Creator of these forces of nature, employs them as his agents, operating in the natural or material world; and He has endowed man with a sufficient degree of wisdom and understanding by which he may comprehend the existence of these forces, and the laws by which they operate, so as to make them subserve the general good of mankind.

Now, if God be without form or personality, then He cannot be separate and distinct from these “natural laws” and “second causes;” hence, they are themselves God, or “modes” of the Divine existence. And if so, matter is eternal, and man is, as the Pantheistic school of philosophy declares, the highest mode or manifestation of God. Now, upon the one hand you have the philosophy of Pantheism, which denies the personality of God, while upon the other you have

the popular theology which teaches tripersonality of God. The one is Pantheism; the other is Polytheism. Between these two extremes of Polytheism, with its three personal Gods, and Pantheism which declares that there is no personal God, lies the truth as to the existence and personality of God. We learn that truth solely from the Word.

Upon the hypothesis either of Polytheism or Tritheism, and Pantheism, no man can understandingly worship God. We must throw intelligence and reason to the winds, and ignorantly worship with the ancient Athenians we know not what; and with them rear altars inscribed "to the unknown God;" or, we must accept the revelation of Jesus Christ as Jehovah God of the Old Testament, as "God manifest in the flesh" in the New Testament, and as the only God of heaven and earth.

At this point in my investigation, I bade the commandments, traditions, and councils of men an everlasting farewell; and took the Word of God, and his Word only, and the holy spirit of truth as my Teacher and Guide, that under his Divine enlightenment I might enjoy the freedom which the knowledge of the truth imparts. For our Lord says, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 32.) And, "if the Son, therefore, shall make you free,

ye shall be free indeed." (ver. 36.) " Howbeit, when He, the spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13.)

I realized that I could not have these Divine promises fulfilled in my own experience while my mind was filled with preconceived notions, and while I was blindly following the counsels and traditions of men, without any thought of keeping the commandments of God, or of putting myself in the way to receive his divine illumination. And I am perfectly satisfied that, if we sought wisdom and knowledge of God more, and of men less, we should have a clearer understanding of truth, and a deeper experience of its cleansing and regenerating power.

When I came to search the Scriptures with a single desire to know the truth for its own sake, and with a mind divested as far as possible of all notions and opinions, I utterly failed to find anywhere taught the doctrine of three Persons in the Godhead. That the Father is one Person, the Son another Person, and the Holy Spirit another, is a statement not found in the Bible. God being revealed as a Trinity in unity, under the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, theologians have assumed that there must of necessity be a trinity of Persons. But it is an assumption merely, and nothing more. It is opposed both to reason and to Revelation.

The uniform and harmonious teaching of the Scriptures is unmistakably against the popular idea of the Trinity; and it is astonishing beyond measure that those who profess to be guided solely by the Word, should persist in confirming themselves in such a falsity. It only illustrates the tremendous power of human tradition and early training.

But I would invite the candid reader to accompany me through the sacred pages in quest of testimony concerning the unity of God. It is everywhere taught in Moses, the Psalms, and in all the Prophets. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is *one* Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. vi. 4, 5.) "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." (Ps. xlv. 6.) In Hebrews (i. 8) this language is applied to Christ. "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts: I am the First and the Last, and besides me there is no God. Is there a God besides me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any." (Isa. xliv. 6, 7.) Now, if there was, or was to be, another God, or almighty Being, equal in every Divine perfection with Jehovah God, the inspirer of the above language, He, certainly, as the omniscient One would

have known it. But He declares there is no other God.

In Rev. i. 8 and xxii. 13, the same language is uttered by our Lord concerning Himself, showing most conclusively that Jehovah God who revealed Himself to Moses and the Prophets was identical with the Lord Jesus Christ, who was "God manifest in the flesh," and "in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and who was declared by the apostle to be "the true God and Eternal Life." Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. i. 8.) "For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.) Who in all Christendom does not know that this prophecy refers solely to the child born of the virgin Mary? Yet He is called the mighty God and the everlasting Father. Hence Jesus says concerning Himself, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. And from henceforth ye know Him, and have SEEN Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen

me, hath seen the Father: And how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John xiv. 7-9.)

Certainly no language can be more explicit, and no instruction more convincing, than the above words uttered by our Lord himself. He leaves no room to suppose that there exists anywhere in all the universe any mighty God or everlasting Father distinct and separate from Himself. He says, "Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me." (John xiv. 11.) Now, if we believe that the Father is a separate Person from Jesus Christ, then we do not believe his word. For He declares in the most positive manner that the Father is *in* Himself, and not out of or separate from Himself. It is impossible for God to lie; and yet Jesus whom the tripersonalists believe to be God, did lie, if the doctrine of tripersonality is true. If Christ's Word is true, the dogmas of men concerning God are not true. And if *they are* true, the statement of our Lord is false. Let the reader choose between these conflicting authorities; and it will not take those long to decide, with whom the Word of God is supreme.

Again: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (John i. 1, 14.) Again we read: "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day

shall there be one Lord, and his name one.” (Zech. xiv. 8.) Thus we find the unity of God taught everywhere in the Holy Word; and we find also that the Lord God of Israel, revealed in the Old Testament as the only God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and the Creator of all things, was also declared to be the Saviour, and the only Saviour and Redeemer, who would, in the fullness of time, come into the world to save his people from their sins. And when He came, it was, “In the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his Person.” (Heb. i. 3.) “Before me there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me; I, even I, am Jehovah, and beside ME THERE IS NO SAVIOUR.” (Isa. x. 11.) “Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the SAVIOUR.” (Isa. xlv. 15.) “But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; for thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth, and made it; He hath established it; He created it not in vain; He formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord, and there is none else; and there is no God else beside me; a just God, and a SAVIOUR, there is none beside me.” “Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isa. xlv. 17-22.)

How grand and glorious these revelations of Jehovah God, the world’s Creator and the world’s

Saviour and Redeemer! Who cannot see that whether as Creator, Saviour, or Redeemer, the one God is always spoken of in such a manner as to leave no possible ground to infer a plurality of Persons? "For thus saith the Lord God: Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. . . . So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." (Ez. xxxiv. 11, 12.) Here God is revealed as a shepherd seeking out and leading his sheep; and in the Gospel of John, our Lord Jesus Christ is presented in the same character, "calling his own sheep by name and leading them out," as "the Good Shepherd that giveth his life for the sheep." Jehovah God the Shepherd of Israel, and the Lord Jesus Christ the Shepherd of his spiritual sheep, are one and the same Divine Being. "My people hath been lost sheep," etc. (Jer. 1. 6.)

Compare the above with John x. 8, and you will see the God of Israel and Jesus the Good Shepherd to be the same. "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but me: for there is no Saviour beside me." (Hosea xiii. 4.) As there is no God save the Lord, so there is no Saviour beside the one God. The God of the Prophets and the Lord of the Gospels are one and the same Divine Jehovah.

The name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In that name the Apostles were commanded to baptize, and in obedience to that command, they went and baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: showing conclusively that they did not understand the Divine Trinity to be a trinity of Persons. Is it not astonishing beyond measure that a vast system of irrational and contradictory theology should have been built on such an assumption? For the entire system of orthodox religion among all the so-called evangelical sects in Christendom, rests solely upon the theory that there are three separate, distinct, infinite, eternal, and uncreated Persons in the Godhead. They are declared to be equal in every divine perfection; and yet the Father is represented as a Being of infinite wrath and vengeance, and as determined to turn the whole world of mankind, his helpless creatures, into the everlasting torments of hell, because Adam and Eve, in disobedience to an arbitrary command, ate some material fruit from a certain tree in the garden of Eden, which is understood to have been a natural locality. Before a human tribunal, Adam and Eve could not have been convicted even of petty larceny; and yet the creeds of men have made the act of such a heinous nature, as to involve the countless millions of earth in eternal ruin and everlasting torment.

Not one jot or tittle of mercy will God the Father show to any soul of man until He has been paid, in suffering, to the uttermost farthing, either in the eternal damnation of a world, or the wreaking of his vengeance upon the head of his own innocent Son. His sense of justice must have satisfaction, and that satisfaction consists in the infliction of his wrath to the uttermost upon the innocent instead of the guilty. But who satisfies the Son's justice? He is admitted to be God, and equal with the Father in every Divine perfection; and yet there is nothing said about the wrath and vengeance and violated law of the Son. Upon whom did He pour the vials of his wrath? He had no wrath, no vengeance, no purpose to destroy mankind, do you say? Then He was not like the Father, either in nature, disposition, or act.

Indeed, according to the popular theory, the Father and Son would not be taken to be related to each other in any sense. One is lovely, the other unlovely. One is all wrath and vengeance, the other is all love and mercy. One damns, and the other saves. One inflicts infinite suffering upon the innocent, the other extends pity and compassion to the guilty, and even prays for his enemies and murderers. From this contrast of character, the idea that the Father and Son are just alike as distinct Persons, possessing equally the same divine perfections, is seen to be absurd. And how can

two Beings so dissimilar be said to be one in any sense? And what would you think of an earthly parent who would compel a disobedient child to walk ten rods on burning coals of fire? Or what would you think of a man who would cause his only son to be subjected to the tortures of a lingering death, though innocent of any misde-meanor, to satiate his wrath toward his enemies who had trespassed on his premises? In either case you would not think such monsters of cruelty and injustice fit to live anywhere on this green earth. Yet these creeds of men have made God, the Father, infinitely more monstrous, cruel, and unjust than either character supposed, in that He will be satisfied with nothing less than the eternal damnation of mankind, or the murder of his own innocent Son at the hands of wicked men.

And if the literal interpretation of the Garden of Eden is correct, and that narrative in Genesis is to be taken as a statement of historical fact, then I do not hesitate to say that God purposely lured an inexperienced couple to their ruin, by laying a snare to entrap their unwary feet. He did this, knowing full well what the result would be—the introduction of sin and death into the world—Himself foreordaining from eternity that his own Son, the second Person in the Trinity, should take the sinner's place, be made a substitute in his stead, and suffer the infliction of

all the vindictive wrath due to all the multiplied transgressions of earth's uncounted millions to the end of time.

Thus, in the execution of this plan, Christ, though innocent, was subjected to a punishment as unrelenting and terrible as though He were guilty of all the sins and crimes ever committed under the sun. And the guilty, hell-deserving violators of his law, by simply believing that Christ became their substitute and paid their debt, go free, receive absolute justification, and are accounted righteous, though not so in themselves, but because the righteousness of Christ is placed to their credit. And all this to placate the Divine vengeance and satisfy the Divine justice. But where is the justice in punishing the innocent or clearing the guilty? And if Christ paid the debt incurred by man's transgression, and purchased his release from condemnation, where is there any exhibition of mercy in man's salvation?

You undertake to prosecute a man for debt, and a friend of his steps in and pays your claim in full, and settles the account. Is it any mercy shown him on your part, that you withdraw the suit and let the man go free? Not in the least. He is free by another's favor, and not on account of any mercy you have shown him. So, if Christ paid the penalty of man's sins, and Divine justice accepted the payment as a full equivalent, then

man has a right to heaven, and it is no mercy on God's part that he goes there. He enters heaven through Christ's favor, and not by the Father's mercy. It is declared in the Sacred Scriptures, over and over again, that "God is Love;" and yet I cannot conceive of any doctrine more at variance with such a character, than that which clothes the Father, as the first Person in the Trinity, with vengeance and wrath, and as giving such an exhibition of vindictive cruelty and injustice as we should hardly expect to encounter in the most brutal and savage type of humanity. My inmost soul cries out against such a shocking idea of God. It is not true. It is a libel on the character of Jehovah. It is a false view of the doctrine of the Trinity. It is a groundless assumption, and as wicked as it is groundless. I tell you the great Babylon of false theological systems built upon it, is bound to be overthrown. It cannot stand. Whatever is not of the Truth, must come to naught.

You may throw around the Laodicean Church of this age the glamour of external splendor, but spiritual poverty, wretchedness, nakedness and blindness lie concealed within. "Because thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) The whole system

is represented as being spewed out of the Lord's mouth. The time has come when men are to be instructed plainly of the Father; when they are to recognize the Unity of God in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity; and when they are to worship the Lord Jesus Christ as the one only God of heaven and earth. The conflicting theories of men have lost their power, and must give place to the harmonious revelation of the one God and only Saviour Jesus Christ. Selfhood must be dethroned, and all self-seeking be forever cast out. All ecclesiasticisms, hierarchies, councils, synods, presbyteries, legislative assemblies of the church, popes, cardinals, bishops, and clerical orders must bow to the Divine mandate, and be remanded to the shades of the past. With the true knowledge of the unity of God restored, the unity of faith will follow, and thence the unity of the Lord's Church on earth. The destruction of the Unity of God by the doctrine of the three Persons in the Godhead, is the root of all the conflicting dogmas, theories and notions of men, the prolific source of the multiplied factions into which Christendom has been divided, and by which Christians have been set one against the other in hot dispute, bitter persecution, and fratricidal strife; constituting, for more than a thousand years of the Christian era, one of the darkest, bloodiest, and most revolting periods of the world's history. The harvest has

been according to the seed sown. Under the restoration of the true doctrine concerning God, the scattered remnants of the Lord's church will be gathered and unified, and "then will all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in whom dwells all the fullness of the God-head bodily."

In the Revelation (chap. i.), Jesus Christ is declared to be the Almighty; and hence the everlasting Father dwells in Him, and not out of or separate from Him. God as to his supreme Divinity, is the Father; as to his Humanity, the Son; and as to the Divine operation proceeding from this conjunction, the Holy Spirit. Hence the Trinity consists of the three *essentials* of one God; and these three are one God in essence and in form. From this it follows that Jesus as to his Humanity was the Son of God, because God was his Father; and He dwells in that Humanity as the soul in the body, and not separate from it. "In man, who was created in the image of God, a trinity exists, as soul, body, and operation. Now, suppose you substitute a trinity of persons in man. The soul is the first person; the body is the second person; and the operation is the third person; and these three persons are one man." Any one can

see that such a supposition would be absurd. And yet the idea is not more contrary to reason and sound sense, than that there are three separate Persons in the Divine Trinity, and that those three Persons make one God. Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) Now, upon the hypothesis that the Father was a distinct Person separate from Jesus Christ, and that He had transferred all power in heaven and earth to his Son, what element of power did the Father have left? None at all. And a being who is powerless, is finite, and not God in any sense. How can you pray to a God who has no power to do you the good you need? You might as well call upon dumb idols to help you in your extremities. And if Christ as the Son is God—as the advocates of the popular theology admit—He is infinite, eternal, and omnipotent; how, then, could any power be given to Him? How could He receive any portion of that which He possessed in its absolute fullness from eternity? Ask any exponent of orthodoxy to explain how this is, or how it can be, and he will tell you it is one of the great mysteries of Godliness, which you are not to pry into. One does not need any clearer evidence that the common idea of the Trinity is a perversion of the truth, and hence not in any sense a doctrine of Revelation, than the fact that its advocates can

give no intelligent and rational elucidation of it, only that it is a mystery, and something to be believed, but which can neither be explained nor understood. It must be believed as one of the cardinal doctrines of the church, however much reason and common sense may be stultified by the credulity.

Such a faith is both blind and dead. It may seem to live, but is dead while it liveth. It clings to a mere man-made dogma with the grip of death. There is in it no knowledge or light of truth, and hence no life. And when the soul is in darkness concerning the central sun of Christian doctrine, how can it be otherwise than in obscurity as to the other doctrines of the Word? "As the less is always included in the greater," so in the light of the true knowledge of God, we see clearly how to come to the knowledge of all other truths. Truth is always in harmony and never in conflict with itself. Truth is light, and in it there is no darkness at all. Therefore, any doctrine which cannot be seen in the light of truth to be true, is never in harmony with sober reason or intelligence; and men outrage both when they receive it as a doctrine of the Lord.

Now, in the examination of this subject, I am deeply impressed with the conviction, that either the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the only God of the universe,

Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, or there is no revelation of the existence of any God whatever. Between the one personal God revealed in the Scriptures as the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Pantheistic philosophy which declares that a personal God has no existence anywhere, I see no middle ground. Hence (as at variance with both reason and Revelation) I reject the popular doctrine of the tripersonality of God, as a doctrine of polytheism based on false assumptions and productive of terribly mischievous consequences, from which we should all pray to be delivered.

And yet for years prejudice blinded my eyes, perverted my judgment, darkened my understanding, stultified my reason, and bound me as in fetters of iron. Bondage was liberty; servitude to the dogmas of the creed was freedom. "Ignorance was bliss," and enlightenment the harbinger of trouble and sorrow. We often reach the dawn, and hail the light of a glorious morning laden with the sweet perfume of a thousand flowers, and melodious with the song of birds, through a long and dreary night of fearful storms and threatening dangers. How delightfully pleasant a thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun after such a night! So, when divine love and light from the Lord who is our Sun, flood our souls with hallowed radiance, how sweetly precious the experience of new-born freedom in the knowledge of truth; pure,

essential, eternal Truth, which is God himself manifested unto us in the Man, Christ Jesus, "in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" "The Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End; who was, and who is, and is to come, the Almighty;" "The great and mighty Jehovah;" "The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" "The true God and eternal life."





II.

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST IN NO SENSE “VICARIOUS.”

WE endeavored to show in the former discourse, both from Reason and Revelation, that there was not, and could not be, three distinct and separate Persons in the Godhead ; that the existence of one almighty and infinite God, who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, precluded the possibility of there being any other almighty and infinite God possessing those attributes ; that the Jehovah God of the Old Testament was repeatedly declared the Saviour and the only Saviour who should come into the world to save mankind ; that all the prophetic utterances concerning the mighty God and the everlasting Father, in his attributes, offices, character, and work, were fulfilled in one Lord Jesus Christ ; in short, that God and Christ are one and the same Person.

This being true, of course the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ assume a widely different aspect, and sustain a vastly changed relation to the whole subject under consideration, from the commonly received view. It was not the second Person in the Godhead who became incarnate, but

Jehovah God himself. "God was manifest in the flesh." "The child born, and the Son given, was the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." (John i. 1-18.) The Apostle declares that "This is the true God and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.) Jesus says (Rev. i. 8), "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." "And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. . . . And I will be his God, and He shall be my Son." (Ibid. xxi. 6, 7.)

Man had lost the knowledge of God. It was not possible for him to approach God, and it was equally impossible for Jehovah to draw near to man without consuming him by the brightness of his ineffable glory. We are not to understand that God had in wrath turned away from man, but that man had, in his blind infatuation, forsaken God. His whole spiritual organism had become deranged. He could neither see with his eyes, nor hear with his ears, nor understand with his heart. He had become "dead in trespasses and sins." His spiritual life had become palsied. His light had become darkness, and he "loved darkness rather

than light, because his deeds were evil." Sin had corrupted his affections, and his wisdom had become folly, and his "righteousness as filthy rags." He was vainly striving to find life in death, light in darkness, liberty in bondage, truth in error, good in evil, happiness in philosophies, and heaven on the plane of the earthly life. No longer controlled by the nobler spiritual faculties of the mind, man became the willing slave of his bodily senses, which addressed themselves solely to material things. He had mistaken the shadow for the substance, the external appearances for the internal realities of spiritual existence. He dwelt in the region and shadow of death. Eternal things were lost to view. The bright effulgence of everlasting life was obscured by the darkness of ignorance, the long night of sin, and the gathering shadows of the cheerless tomb.

God had in numberless ways tried to win man to Himself, but in vain. He had called to him to turn and live; but he closed his ears against the call, and refused to hear. Every offer of mercy had been disregarded. The Divine counsels had been set at naught. God's messages of love had been treated with contempt, and his prophets had been persecuted and slain. Sin in all its forms held high carnival, and all the hells were ready to celebrate their triumph in the everlasting destruction of the human race. The fullness of time had

come. The church of the holy prophets was consummated. It had come to its end. The knowledge of truth was lost. The heavens were darkened, and their rejoicing light no longer shone on the pathway of man.

In this period of impenetrable darkness, at the point of man's deepest degradation, and at the time of the profoundest ignorance of spiritual truth, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared as Jehovah, God manifest in the flesh. He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. He assumed our human nature with all its infirmities, weaknesses, susceptibilities to temptation, and with all its exposures to hell's malignity, and every form of satanic intrigue; and in that assumed humanity He fought against and conquered all the enemies of man, "preaching deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to those that were blind, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God."

Christ came to subdue man's enemies, not to pay a debt. He came to conquer death and hell, not to suffer the vengeance and wrath of the Father. He came to fulfill every jot and tittle of the Law, not to suffer the penalty of its violation. This could not be done, except by the assumption of our nature. Hence the necessity of the Incarnation. As Jehovah God could not approach man in his

diseased and inverted condition, nor could man draw near to God, it was necessary there should be an atonement and a Mediator in order that man might be saved. But neither an atonement nor Mediator was at all necessary in the sense in which those terms are commonly employed. The whole nature of sacrifice as taught in the Jewish economy, and as applied to Christ, is perverted or misunderstood. This will manifestly appear as we proceed.

The literal translation of the word rendered "atonement," as every scholar knows, is at-one-ment—reconciliation. A state or condition of being at-one or in agreement with God. Hence, when it is said that Christ made an atonement, we are not to understand that He made a penal sacrifice of Himself, either to appease the wrath of God, satisfy his divine justice, or purchase his favor for man. We have a poor estimate of the worth or excellence of favors bought for a consideration, and bestowed upon the same principle, even among men in the world. Executive or judicial clemency purchased with gold or anything else, we are accustomed to regard as a corrupt bestowment of favor. But what shall we say of a clemency which can be moved to compassion only by the payment of the full measure of suffering either by the transgressor or an innocent substitute? We have never admired very much the

character of Shylock in his inhuman and persistent call for the fulfillment of the letter of his "bond," demanding from Antonio, the "Merchant of Venice," the stipulated "pound of flesh." It reveals a character wholly brutalized, without human feelings or sympathies. And we instinctively recoil at the contemplation of a being so little like a man, so much like a fiend. But, suppose Shylock's only son had come forward and said: "Father, I will take the merchant's place as his substitute. Spare him, and cut thy pound of flesh from my breast." And the father had answered: "I accept thy offer, son; and when the law of Venice is fulfilled according to the letter of my bond, then is the gentile free, and he walks out through the blood of my own son to liberty and life." And suppose further, that, instead of an honorable merchant whom misfortune had overtaken, Antonio represented a miserable thief who had robbed the Jew of his three thousand ducats, you then have an illustration in a most revolting and loathsome character, that but faintly pictures God, if the common theory of the atonement be the correct one. This theory is substantially as follows:—

Man had sinned. He had broken the law of God, and by so doing had incurred the displeasure of the almighty Father. He must therefore suffer the penalty of the law transgressed, which is death

—eternal death. The whole race of man was involved in Adam's transgression, and, without exception, must be made to suffer the eternal torments of hell-fire, unless a substitute can be found who can render an equivalent for man's sins by suffering the condemnation of God's violated law in his own person, and thus stay or remove the penalty of man's transgression. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from eternity the second Person in the Trinity, offers to become such substitute; offers to take the sinner's place, stand in his stead, and suffer the actual infliction of the Father's wrath to the uttermost, and thus purchase man's deliverance from the penalty of sin.

The death of Christ in the sinner's stead, as a substitute, a penal offering for sin, an atoning sacrifice for sin, is the central idea in every orthodox theory of man's salvation. It is the burden in sermon and in song. "Christ died and paid it all, yes, all the debt I owe." All that is necessary for the sinner to do, is just to believe that Jesus has done and paid it all, and accept pardon from the Father for the Son's sake, and his eternal salvation is secured. His eternal salvation is purchased by the blood of Christ, and all the vilest sinner has to do, in order to be saved, is to accept the purchased favor. Just believe in Jesus—believe just now—and you are pardoned, forgiven, and eternally saved.

Now I submit, in passing, that Christ never once presented any such theory, nor did He ever preach any such doctrine. In all his teaching there is not a word about his taking the sinner's place as a substitute, for the purpose of appeasing the wrath of God and paying the sinner's debt. Nor is there one sentence about any man ever being saved by faith alone. Yet the common theory teaches Christians everywhere to place their hope, and their *only* hope, in the death of Christ, by which the wrath of God has been appeased and Divine justice satisfied. They are taught to constantly remind God that their debt is paid; that they do not owe Him anything, since Jesus paid it all. He has squared the account in God's ledger, where human thoughts, words, and actions are recorded—not only all sins committed in the past, but all they may commit in time to come—all is settled. And, as though God might possibly forget that the debt was paid, and exact the penalty the second time, Christ is represented as standing before the Father, pointing continually to his pierced hands and side to remind the Father that He has Himself paid the sinner's debt, and imploring Him to be merciful and not demand another settlement.

Viewing the work of Christ as is commonly done, from a business standpoint of debt and credit, how utterly unbusiness-like is the whole theory! For, if it is true that Christ paid the

debt justice demanded, and settled man's account so that he could be regarded as square on the books, how superfluous the office of a Mediator or an Advocate or Intercessor before the throne of God, to plead for man's acquittal. Logically, you are forced to regard God as wholly untrustworthy to keep his agreement made with the Son. So full of implacable wrath and vengeance, and so greedy of inflicting torture and suffering, as to be determined to damn those for whom, and in whose stead, Christ had already suffered damnation, that He must be constantly reminded by a Being as omnipotent as Himself, that He must not demand a second payment of the debt, or you must admit that the office of Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor is entirely superfluous, and therefore nothing more than a creation of fallible men and a play upon words. In the one case you draw the character of God as a monster whom no one could love or worship ; and in the other you render all the Scriptures concerning the mediatorial work of Christ, unmeaning and without force.

If the Father is such a Being as the popular theology makes Him ; if He cared more for his personal satisfaction in the exercise of his wrath than He did either for his own innocent Son or the great world of mankind peopled with uncounted myriads of his helpless creatures ; if He would purposely involve the whole race in the ruin of

the fall, and consign them all to eternal death unless He could visit a like doom upon an innocent victim ; if this be the truthful picture of God, then I submit that it would be impossible for man or angel to really worship or love Him.

It is not possible to conceive of a more unlovely character than is usually ascribed to God the Father. And yet men will pretend to adore such a character and worship such a God, and at the same time to believe that all the heathen nations, and all unbaptized, non-elect infants are consigned to the unending torments of hell. Of course, a God who would punish his only-begotten Son, when He knew He was innocent, as though He were guilty of all the crimes of the whole world, would not scruple to damn innocent babes for the transgression of their parents, or consign to hell the poor ignorant heathen for not accepting a salvation which was never offered them, and for not believing in a Saviour of whom they never heard, and of whose existence they could have no knowledge. It would seem that the monstrous injustice of such an idea would only need to be stated, to be at once and forever rejected by Christians everywhere. But thousands cling to it still. How many in the churches to-day are there from a knowledge or love or loving practice of the truth, walking, living and abiding in the commandments of the Lord ? How few love Christ even for what He is in Himself, or

from any clear, intelligent conception of his character or attributes? People have fled to the church as a sort of hiding-place from the vengeance of an angry God. They love Christ because they are taught that He has paid their debt, and that by his intercessions He prevents the Father from sending them to hell. Their admiration is based not so much upon the character and attributes of Him who saves, as upon the fact that, although they are sinners, He has provided that they shall not be sent to hell at last. To escape perdition and gain heaven, and that by the righteousness of another, is the main idea. It is the central motive. Sin is dreaded because of its penalty, not because it is an offense against God. And when it can be made to appear that the penalty has been borne by a substitute, then the dread is removed, and the sin is indulged without fear of consequences. Not that real Christians knowingly sin that grace may abound, but the tendency of the doctrine is in that direction. There is not much intelligence in such worship, and no safety in such a theory.

Many read the Bible, and pray, and attend church, and give alms, only because they are afraid an angry God will follow them with vengeance if they do not do these things. They really love sin in one form or another, and only fear its punishment. "Theologians have confounded the penalty of sin with the sin itself, and in so doing

have committed a fatal error. There is nothing in the Scriptures about Christ saving us from the penalty of our sins, except as He saves us from our sins. He saves us from our sins, not their penalty. There is the same relation between sin and its penalty, that there is between disease and suffering or pain. Remove the disease and the pain ceases. Remove the sin, or, by repentance, cease to do evil, and the penalty is removed at once." Reformation begins in the will and the understanding, and manifests itself in a reformed external deportment. It operates from the internal outward to the external, and not the reverse.

Now, we propose to show in what the atonement of Christ consists. He assumed our nature, and was manifested in the flesh, in a material body like our own. There was no other way by which He could come to us, so as to save us from our sins. "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham." Hence the nature He assumed was the corrupt nature of mankind. It was filled with evil, and with evil tendencies in every form. The nature that Christ assumed was our nature in its hopeless bondage and captivity to sin, and in its close affiliation with hell. In his assumed nature He bore our sins and sustained our sorrows, because He met our enemies and endured our temptations. He suffered as we suffer; wept as we weep; sorrowed as we sorrow; hungered as

we hunger; and wearied as we weary. He was overcoming the evils of our nature in the humanity He took upon Himself; and the conflict was fearful, and the agony and suffering intense beyond conception, or the power of language to describe. "Truly He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

"Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of his prayer,"

while the wilderness and the garden bore testimony to the terrible nature of the conflict. The focus of a world's agony centered in Him. He was subjugating hell within the great world of mankind, and solving the problem of man's deliverance therefrom. When He drove those out who had corrupted the temple with merchandise, and made the house of prayer a den of thieves, He but symbolized the effective manner in which He casts devils out of men and purifies the temple of the human heart.

From the time Christ was twelve years old till He was about thirty, at which period He began to preach his Gospel, we know nothing of Him. We have every reason to believe, however, that He was constantly "about his Father's business," working out human redemption by the regeneration or glorification of his assumed humanity; overcoming all its temptations to evil, and subduing within it every evil lust and passion, and repelling all as-

saults of evil from without, he gradually lifted the nature assumed, from its low estate of sin, suffering, and bondage, into a higher and more perfect state of conjunction with the Father, which was his own Divine nature. The whole life of Christ was one continued conflict with the corruptions of his assumed humanity, and with the power of all the hells. The last of his temptations was the passion of the cross, and his final victory was his resurrection from the dead. He had cleansed his nature from all its hereditary evils and sinful tendencies. He had gained the final and everlasting victory over the malignant hosts of hell. Humanity was now glorified ; it was lifted up and sanctified. Conjunction between the human and the Divine was an accomplished fact. A perfect Mediator was thus established between God and men in "the man, Christ Jesus." It was now possible for God to flood the human will with his Divine love, and pour his Divine light and wisdom into the understanding. He could now reach mankind in their lost and wretched condition, and as the great Physician impart the healing balm to sorrowing hearts, extend his omnipotent helping hand to the helpless millions of earth, by which every one who is willing to be saved, and who complies with the conditions by willing and hearty co-operation with the Lord, is enabled to overcome

all his evils, even as Christ overcame, and thus to stand complete in all the will of God.

Thus man becomes reconciled to God. He comes into agreement or at-one-ment with the Lord. It was impossible for Christ to accomplish this work of human redemption without suffering. "He was made perfect through suffering." Those sufferings included the death of the cross, and salvation could never have reached the race without it. But Christ's death was incidental, and not the main purpose for which He assumed humanity. It was in no sense a penal sacrifice to appease the wrath of God. It is not true that He died in the sinner's stead. To destroy man's enemies and reach him in his lost condition, necessitated Christ's death. But the salvation of man was made possible only by the destruction of his enemies. "The omnipotent power of the life of Christ that reaches man, is what saves him, and not the incidental death that was endured in bringing that life down to him." He came into this world to fulfill every jot and tittle of the Law in our humanity, not to pay the penalty of its violation. He came to manifest the Father's love, not to satisfy his wrath. In short, Christ came expressly to reveal the Father and restore to the world the lost knowledge of God. He came to reconcile men to God, not God to men. There is not a line in the Bible about Christ reconciling God to the world. Do you say that no

one believes any such doctrine? I affirm that many have believed and do now profess to believe it. But whether they do or do not believe it, it follows logically from the common theory of the atonement. If God is so angry with the world that his wrath must be propitiated before He will save a single soul, what is that but being reconciled to man through the victim upon whom He pours to his full satisfaction the vials of his wrath? There is absolutely no escape from such a conclusion. If the creed does not so express it, the theory certainly implies it. And it implies it so fully that no sophistry can evade it, and no play of words can expunge it.

But, contrary to all this, we read that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Cor. v. 9.) Again: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. v. 10.) Our evil human nature was reconciled first in Him, and his humanity became glorified as head over all things to the church and as our everlasting Mediator. (See Col. i. 17, 18; ii. 1-10.) So in Ephesians: "For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, so that He might reconcile both unto God in one body, etc." (Eph.

ii. 15, 16; see also Col. i. 19-21; John i. 29; Titus ii. 13, 14.)

We will now proceed to a consideration of the term sacrifice, both as to its real and its assumed meaning. In its commonly understood import, the term sacrifice is both perverted and misunderstood. In the Jewish economy it had no such signification as is applied to it in the systems of modern theology. Yet, through the perversion of the meaning of that single term, erroneous views of the work of Christ have been imbibed, and all the prevalent theories of redemption, so conflicting both with reason and with Scripture, have thereby been confirmed.

The first definition given to sacrifice, is, "To make sacred or holy." Its secondary meaning is, "To give up something we prize very highly, for the good of others." It is clear that in both these senses Christ became a sacrifice for us. In the language of another, He sustained or carried our sorrows, our temptations, our griefs, our conflicts, our weaknesses and infirmities in his own humanity. In short, his whole life, in untiring devotion, was laid down for us. He truly died for us, but not in our stead, nor to propitiate the vengeance of the Father. It is also truly said in the Scriptures that God sacrificed his Son for us. That is, the supreme Divinity, which was the Father, sacrificed, set apart, offered up the human, which was

the Son, by utterly destroying every evil pertaining to his humanity, as the Jewish priest sacrificed the animal upon the altar. Hence Christ was a sacrifice for us in the truest sense of the term. The common notion is, that when a person brought an animal to be sacrificed, it implied an acknowledgment that he deserved to be treated as the animal was about to be treated. As the beast was to suffer death, so he deserved to suffer damnation. And as he was required by the law to lay his hands upon the head of the victim, this was supposed to imply a transfer of his guilt from himself to the animal, which therefore was accepted in his place to appease the anger of God. But as the sacrifice of a dumb brute was a trifling substitute for the damnation of a human soul, it was supposed that the offering up of the animal had nothing to do with the deliverance of the sinner, but served as a symbol of the death of Christ, who is regarded by every system of orthodox theology as the great Victim to whom a transfer was made of the sins of the whole human race, and who, in his death upon the cross, bore all the punishment due to the numberless transgressions of men.

But the term sacrifice, as used in the ceremonial worship of the Jews, had no such meaning as this. The affections of the person offering the animal in sacrifice, were symbolized. Killing the animal was, in fact, no part of the sacrifice. It was the

incidental preparation for it. The symbolism of the burnt offerings and sacrifices when rightly understood, shows the unreserved devotion and consecration of all the thoughts and affections of the worshipers to the Lord. No Jewish worshiper ever dreamed, in offering his burnt sacrifices, that he was appeasing the anger of God. You cannot find an intelligent Jew anywhere who will tell you that the term sacrifice ever had any such significance among the people of his nation. He will tell you that those offerings and sacrifices made under the Mosaic law were to impress upon the minds and hearts of the people that, as the Lord was the Father of mercies and the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and the loving, generous bestower of all blessings, so their purest affections and all their powers of body and mind, should be consecrated, set apart, and sacrificed to Him as their reasonable service, while they should put away all their evil doings, as sins against God. Herein and in this sense appears the absolute perfection of our Lord's sacrifice for us. Hence He says: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." He offers Himself up, consecrates Himself without reserve, as a whole offering, a perfect sacrifice, in order to accomplish the salvation of man. Thus, when his humanity was sanctified and purified from all its evil tendencies, it became capable of communicating

the Divine life and the Divine light to the world of mankind. That Divine humanity "ever liveth to make intercession for us." Our power to overcome evil, whether internal or external, and to practice good, and walk in the divine precepts, is from the Lord alone. We are said to be saved, purchased, redeemed, justified, and made nigh by the blood of Christ. Whatever meaning you may give to the term blood, the view already given of the meaning of sacrifice perfectly agrees with all these expressions.

The common idea of the atoning blood of Christ is based upon the perverted notion of sacrifice, and supposes that when Christ took the sinner's place and died in his stead, that God regarded Christ as his enemy, and poured upon his innocent head all the vials of his fiercest wrath to the uttermost, even all the punishment due to the sins of the whole world. But that a God who is love itself, could pretend that his Son was guilty when He knew He was not, and punish the innocent as though the measure of his guilt would contain that of the whole world from Creation's birth to the end of time, is a doctrine so revolting to reason and every sense of justice and right, that it would seem impossible that anybody on earth could be found credulous enough to believe it. It is a monstrous perversion of the truth concerning

man's salvation. It dishonors God, perverts the Scriptures, confirms falsities, and misleads men.

The Gospel teaches us to forgive our enemies. Our Lord taught that we should forgive those who sin against us seven times a day, even until we can number seventy times seven forgivenesses. No idea is held out that we are to have satisfaction before we forgive. If our enemy says he repents, we are to forgive him, and there the matter ends. And are we poor human creatures to be more forgiving than the infinite God of love? We are forbidden to take the least measure of vengeance even on an enemy; and will a God of infinite love and infinite justice take vengeance on his innocent Son? Is God "Love" only in name and not in essence? Can He be swayed by passions that would disgrace the worst type of humanity? Are attributes to be adored in God, that would be execrated in man? We are taught that God will not forgive anybody a single transgression unless He can wring from somebody an amount of suffering equivalent to the offense. The logic of the theory is, that God takes his pay for sin by the infliction of torture, either on the sinner or his substitute; and hence He will never forgive sin at all, unless He is paid for doing it. From this it follows that God requires in his creatures the practice of a charity which He does not Himself practice, and consigns them to the everlasting torments of hell,

because they are disposed to follow his example in the matter of forgiving enemies, by taking satisfaction in the free exercise of wrath first, and extending forgiveness afterwards.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the elder brother, who was angry and would not go in to greet the returned wanderer, more truthfully represents the orthodox idea of God than does the loving, compassionate father, who beheld his son while yet a great way off, and ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him a glad welcome back to his father's house. Christ intended the father in that parable to represent God in his infinite love, compassion, and forgiveness toward his wandering, sinning, suffering children on earth. Did the father demand any satisfaction? Did he inflict any wrath upon his repentant son? Did he refuse to receive him beneath the shelter of the old home until somebody had paid an equivalent for the fortune he had wasted in riotous living? Did he insist that his first-born son should be slain to appease his wrath for the other's sins? By no means. It was far otherwise. He orders the fat-ted calf to be killed, and merry-making to begin. It is all the satisfaction he wants, that his lost boy whom he had mourned as dead, is received safe and sound within the circle of the dear old home.

This is a true picture, in finite measure, of the immeasurable, infinite love of God. There is in

it no wrath, no vengeance, no vicarious atonement, no payment of debt, no rendering an equivalent, no arbitrary demand for satisfaction, and no theological dogmas about the sufferings of the damned unless a substitute is provided to placate the wrath of the father. It is as clear from all these things as a cloudless sky at night spangled with the bright stars of God. As another has forcibly said, "We find in it no contract, no implacable and enraged Deity, no technicalities of law, no division of the Godhead into a plurality of Persons, no sacrifice of an innocent Son for a guilty race, no impossible exchange of sin for righteousness, or righteousness for sin, no vicarious suffering and no vicarious goodness.

"Our Father himself comes down upon the earth, as the Good Shepherd, in search of his lost sheep, and comes in the only way He could come. He endures all the labors that the work demands. He suffers all the temptations and agonies that are incident to that work. He subdues all the enemies that oppose Him. He finds his lost children blind, naked, starved, in prison, diseased, dying, and He opens their eyes; He clothes them; He feeds them with heavenly food, his own love and truth; He throws open the prison-doors; He heals their diseases; He gives them eternal life. Could infinite love do less? Could infinite power do more? How beautiful, harmonious, and complete this view of

the Lord's sufferings and death ; how consistent with itself ; with infinite Love and Wisdom ; with human reason ; with the wisest and purest love in human hearts."

Happy are they on whom the clear light of truth upon this great subject has dawned. It is like the passing away of a dark and angry cloud. The heavens no longer gleam with the fearful lightnings of Divine vengeance, nor do the thunders of Jehovah's wrath shake the soul with dread alarms. All is calm, peaceful, and serene. The Lord as a sun pours forth the effulgence of his divine love and truth, and all over the earth, in every nation, whoever turns to Him is warmed by his love and enlightened by his truth. That love and truth are as free to the whole world as the circumambient air that surrounds the globe, or as the light of the sun that floods our earth with his cheerful beams.

In full-orbed splendor the Divine love and light now shines upon some people, and faint glimmerings already tinge the sombre gloom of the more benighted nations. They who walk according to the light they have, are led into more light by the Lord. In this view of the atonement of Christ, the whole race of man is brought into conjunction, more or less, with the Lord and the divine fullness of love and truth that flow from Him. Thus He is the "true light that lighteth every man that

cometh into the world." It is the light of life, which shines alike for all, and which all may receive. The love of darkness is what keeps man from the light; the love of falsity is all that hides the knowledge of the truth; and the love of sin and self alone bars our entrance into heaven, and prevents conjunction with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the reception of the fullness of his infinite blessing of salvation and eternal life. By repentance we put away our sins, and by turning to the Lord and walking in his commandments we are conjoined to Him, and "receive of his fullness, even grace for grace."





III.

THE ASCENSION AND MEDIATION OF CHRIST.

HE great apostle to the Gentiles says: "Now a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, but God is one." (Gal. iii. 20.) "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.)

In the contemplation of any subject in which Infinity dwells, the finite mind is more or less encompassed with difficulties. Thought is weak, speech crippled, and language circumscribed by limitations that render it impossible to gain but an imperfect conception of that which is infinite, absolute, and eternal.

Hence nothing can be more unwise than for any body of men of imperfect knowledge, limited attainments, defective judgments, warped often by prejudice, swayed by early training, and biased by traditions, to prescribe the limit of religious thought, fix the boundary line of religious knowledge, or assume to grasp by mental conception the shoreless, fathomless ocean of infinite truth. None but the omniscient God can fully comprehend that which is absolute and eternal. Hence, though we may go on "increasing in the knowledge of God"

forever, we shall never exhaust the fountain of knowledge. It is impossible to condense thought or simplify language, so as to explain any doctrine drawn purely from the Word, in such a manner that every mind can grasp it in all its bearings. There will be depths fathomless to some, heights above the reach of others, and to the top of which some pinions can never soar. Nor will eternity, nor the eternal progression of unfettered mind, remove the difficulty. No longer under the limitations of time and space, our growth in love and our expansion in the knowledge of the Infinite will far surpass all our present capacities.

In the contemplation of a subject like the one now before us, we must not forget that natural things are to be considered in the realm of nature, and spiritual things in the domain of spirit. Confounding them insures confusion of ideas, obscurity of understanding, and apparent conflict of one truth with another. This is done whenever you undertake to explain a spiritual fact in a natural way, or according to natural or material circumstances. In every such case "counsel is darkened by words without knowledge." Error is confirmed as truth, and darkness as light. Making no distinction, or not the proper one, between spiritual truth and natural facts, one never obtains anything more than a knowledge of the Word in its literal sense, and hence must remain in utter ignorance

of the Word in its spiritual sense. By those who do not know, the idea of a deeper sense than that of the mere letter of the Word is regarded as foolishness. Everything recorded in the Bible is taken as a statement of natural, historical, biographical, literal facts, and nothing more.

In this view of the case, the Bible treats much more of earthly and temporal than it does of heavenly and eternal things; and says much more about earthly kingdoms and nations than about the Lord and his church. In its spiritual sense lies the truth or evidence of its Divine inspiration. If there is no deep, internal, spiritual sense underneath the letter of the Word, then it is no more inspired than any mere human production. In the rigid adherence to the practice of literal interpretation, not only have erroneous and conflicting theories been multiplied, sects and sectarian divisions created, science and revelation brought into conflict, reason and intelligence outraged, but vast numbers of reasoning, thinking, progressive men have turned away with disgust, refusing to have anything to do with religious systems built on a blind and unreasoning credulity.

Our Lord says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." When He assumed a material human body, He appeared among men in the human form. That was the only way in which He could approach

man. He must come in man's nature and in his bodily form ; and then not only could Jehovah draw near to man, but man could draw near to God, and see with the natural eyes the material form in which God dwelt, and through which He was manifested to the world. "To seek and to save those who were lost," was the object for which our Lord came into the world ; and for the full and complete accomplishment of the same end, He left the world and returned to the Father. All that He could do in the flesh was done. When He uttered that memorable cry, "It is finished," the work for which He assumed our nature was completed. The last battle and the last temptation closed with the passion of the cross. His humanity was now glorified, and the human was brought at-one with the Divine. All the gross, material elements of the nature He assumed were dissipated, and his human was made Divine.

Hence, after his resurrection, our Lord was never seen with the natural eyes. When He was laid in the sepulchre, He had left the world and withdrawn from all recognition by the natural senses. By his resurrection from the dead He entered the spiritual world, and his own disciples never saw Him except as their eyes were opened to behold Him in his glorified state. He came from the Father, and came into the world. Now He had left the world and was about to

return to the Father. Our Lord says He came down from heaven, yet we are not to understand by this that He ever left heaven. (John iii. 13.) "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." God sent his Son into the world. (John iii. 17; xvii. 18.) When God manifested Himself in the flesh, it did not necessitate his leaving heaven to come to earth as one person leaves one country and goes to another. Nor did He send his Son in the sense in which an earthly parent would send his son from home to some distant country to do a certain work. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth." (John i. 1, 14.) The Father sent forth his eternal Word, which is his Truth or Wisdom, and that Word was made flesh, or became incarnate, and hence was called the Son of God, dwelling among men full of grace and truth.

God did not become man, nor did the Son as a separate Divine Person come into the world; but Jehovah veiled Himself in human flesh, that He might approach man without consuming him by the brightness of his glory or his divine essence. Hence, in order to understand what is meant by the ascension of Christ, we must divest our minds of the literal idea of ascent and descent; and also

of the thought of two separate and distinct Persons in the Godhead. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He is said to have descended ; but He did not leave heaven to come to earth, for it would be simply impossible for God, who fills heaven and earth, to leave either. He was as much in heaven when He was manifest on earth in the flesh, as He ever was or is now. And God was no more truly on earth when He became incarnate than He was before ; and He is in the world now as really as when in the material body.

God fills immensity, is omnipresent, and cannot be said to leave one place to go to another. "Do not I fill heaven and earth ? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxiii. 24.) Hence, by descent and ascent we are not to understand a change in space, but a change in state. In the mind of man the uppermost faculty is the will ; then the understanding ; thence the thoughts, words, and actions. So every human mind consists of two principal faculties—the will and the understanding. Now to descend is to proceed from the will downward to the understanding, and thence downward to the thought, speech, and external deportment. From the highest to the lowest faculty, or from the spiritual and eternal to the natural and temporal, or from the unseen to the visible, is descent. From the material to the spiritual, from the visible to the invisible, from

the human to the Divine, and from the earthly to the heavenly, is ascent.

In the ascension of Christ, therefore, we need to divest the mind of all ideas of time and space, and not to think of Him as ascending through space to an imaginary locality above the starry heavens, but as passing through a change of state represented by his transfiguration on the Holy Mount. Tabor, as "a high mountain apart," was itself a perfect symbol of the exalted state in which our Lord was at that time. The state was one of heavenly exaltation, and really in the spiritual world. Christ and his three chosen apostles literally ascended Mount Tabor, but spiritually they ascended the holy mount of God in the change of state denoted by the transfiguration. "Hence, when Christ glorified his human nature, making it Divine and one with the Father, He is said to have ascended up where He was before, that He might fill all things." "We are not to suppose that the Divine human became the same as God and identical with the Father, but that it came into harmony with God, capable of being filled with all the Divine fullness, thus becoming a perfect medium for communicating that Divine fullness to men." Now the Spirit of Truth can flow through that glorified Humanity from the Father to his children on earth, enabling them to cry, "Abba, Father." And you can see what Jesus

meant when He said to his disciples that, unless He went away, that is, ascended to the Father, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, would not come. But that, if He went away, He would send Him unto them. (John xvi. 7-14.) The Holy Spirit is the Lord himself in the Word, and not a third Person in the Godhead. Jesus says He will send them another Comforter, "even the Spirit of Truth." "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." (John xiv. 17, 18.) He says He will come and make his abode with them. (Ibid. v. 23.) "As He is in the Father and the Father in Him, so conjointly do they dwell in the renewed wills and understandings of men, as the soul dwells in the body."

The Divine life which now flows through the glorified Humanity without anything to impede its progress, is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the bread that came down from heaven, the water of life, the well of water springing up into everlasting life, the opened fountain for sin and uncleanness, the river of the water of life, the Lord's flesh and blood, Bethesda, Siloam; in short, the Lord himself in his divine fullness manifesting Himself to the children of men according to their capacity and preparation to receive of that fullness.

Through the unobstructed flow of the divine spirit of life and truth, through the human will

and understanding, man is renewed, changed, washed, cleansed, purified, reformed, and regenerated. Cleansed by the washing of the Word, renewed by the renewing of the Holy Spirit, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and purified by the blood of Christ, all mean the same thing. The holy germ of the Divine life thus enters the soil of our human nature. As it germinates and springs up, it subdues that evil nature to itself. It becomes purified from its evil and sinful tendencies precisely as our Lord's corrupt human became purified and made Divine. The Lord is thus said to dwell in us and we in Him. The water we drink becomes in us a "well of water, springing up into everlasting life." The bread we eat is the living bread which came down from heaven, that we may eat thereof and not die. "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John vi. 50, 51.)

Thus we are regenerated and born anew, and become sons of God. (John i. 12.) Our Heavenly Father comes to us, and inclines us by his Holy Spirit to come to Him. As He overcame our enemies in his own human nature, so He enables us to overcome. His victory is our victory, his righteousness is our righteousness, and his salva-

tion is our salvation, not in the sense of being *imputed* to us, but realized within us as a living force, "the power of an endless life." "The righteousness of Christ can no more be imputed to the sinner than the health of a sound body can be imputed to an invalid, or sanity to the insane." You cannot transfer character from one person to another. There can be no exchange of guilt for innocence, or innocence for guilt, except as one becomes such in the transformation of his own character.

Yet the popular view of this subject is, that an instantaneous transfer may be made of the righteousness of Christ to the sinner, and of the unrighteousness of the sinner to Christ. Out of this theory has grown the notion that a man may trample every commandment of the Decalogue under his feet till the very hour of his death, and then, if he accepts this doctrine, and believes with all his heart that the blood of Christ has atoned for his sins, they will be instantly blotted out, and he will go straight to heaven as a companion of the holy angels of God. "But in such a doctrine a serious mistake is made as to the nature of sin. Sin is regarded as something that can be atoned for by the suffering of some other person than the sinner himself. It supposes that the sinner may be bought off, or delivered from sin and its consequences, by the payment of a stipulated price con-

sisting of a certain amount of suffering endured by another person substituted in the sinner's place. Hence pardon, forgiveness, and salvation, are things that must be *purchased*, and that only through another's sufferings. But sin is a spiritual disease." It is an inverted condition of the soul. To heal all our diseases and redeem our lives from destruction, Jesus comes as the great Physician.

Thus the Lord, in the assumption of our poor, weak, depraved, sinful nature, is said to have descended even into the lower parts of the earth—the nethermost state of man's depraved, perverted, inverted, wretched existence; culminating in his death upon the cross at the hands of wicked men, amid the darkness and utter oblivion of all knowledge of truth. "From this point He began the ascent by the resurrection, thus putting off all that was corruptible or material in his human, all that was not perfectly in accord with his essential Divine nature, and by this means making his human Divine, so that the infinite Jehovah dwells in it, as the soul of man dwells in his material body. Glorifying his human nature and conjoining it with God himself, was the ascension of the Son to the Father." Our Lord came from the holy presence of the Father, or from the exalted heights of his essential Divine nature, to the lowest, most desperate condition, where humanity groans under bondage to hell; and having conquered all man's

enemies in his assumed human nature, and having endured all the sufferings inseparably connected with his mission, and having succeeded in reaching the lowest, saddest Gethsemane of human experience, He returns the mighty conqueror, "with dyed garments from Bozrah." He returns as the "King of Glory," from the subjugation of hell's dominion. The eternal gates lift up their heads; the everlasting doors are wide open flung; and Messiah, in his ransomed, redeemed, regenerated, glorified humanity, now all victorious, passes the high arches of heaven's "gates of pearl" to the Father's embrace, to the throne of God, where "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

Thus it is manifest that Christ came to redeem men not from the Father's wrath, but from hell's dominion; not from the penalty of a violated law, but from the accursed slavery of sin; not from the avenging justice of God, but from the cruel injustice and oppression of our enemies. He does this by shedding his own blood, which is the Spirit of Truth, and which He pours through his glorified humanity into the souls of men, by which they are enlightened, cleansed, and regenerated.

While the idea of the literal blood of Christ fills the mind, it is impossible to get at the *truth* concerning his offices and work. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The literal material blood shed on Calvary passed away just as any

other natural substance does. But Christ's blood understood as the Spirit of Truth, by which we are cleansed and sanctified, never passes away. He sheds it still, and will forever shed it, pouring it into the hearts of men and angels. Hence He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, which is everlasting, needing no renewal, and which is never to be abrogated or set aside. This is indeed redemption by his blood. If not, what is, and where will you find it? If by this means men are not reconciled to God, through what agency can you hope to effect their reconciliation? If this is not the atonement, the coming together of God and man, the agreement, the *at-one-ment*, there is no meaning in the term and no force in language.

Contrast, if you please, the commonly received view of the atonement and mediation of Christ with that here presented. According to the popular idea, Christ has by his sufferings and death appeased the wrath of the Father, satisfied the demands of justice, redeemed from the penalties of sin or the condemnation of the law those that believe in the virtues of his atoning sacrifice, and paid all the debt which the numberless transgressions of mankind had contracted. When the sinner believes this theory, he is justified freely, absolved from all his iniquities and adopted into the family of God. His sins were imputed to Christ and Christ's merits are imputed to him. In God's

ledger the sins and crimes of the whole world are charged over to the Saviour's account. He assumes them, and takes their settlement upon Himself. All his merits are placed to the sinner's credit, and henceforth God looks upon him as though he had never sinned. A regular contract between the Father and Son has been entered into. It has been signed, sealed, acknowledged, and recorded. It is unalterable. It is impossible for either party to evade it or render it null and void. God the Father, who is the party of the first part, cannot set it aside; for, as it is impossible for Him to lie, He must keep his agreement. Jesus Christ, the party of the second part, cannot evade it, for He is God also, and hence it is impossible for Him not to do as He agrees. Accordingly He carries out his part of the agreement in good faith. He settles the account, pays the debt, appeases the Father's wrath, suffers the infliction of that wrath till the bitter cup is drained to the dregs. He suffers till justice cries, "It is enough;" and the Father is satisfied that He has received a full equivalent for the debt; that the sins of the whole world have been atoned for, and that his Son has performed his part of the contract.

Now, the Father is bound by a solemn compact to forgive or remit the sins of the whole world, especially of such as believe. He can exact no part of the penalty of sin from man. He can

bring no part of the sufferings of sin upon the sinner. If the debt has been paid by Christ, God the Father has no right to anything in addition thereto; and if Christ atoned for the sins of the whole world, then logically the whole world is freed from sin and its consequences. According to the terms of the contract, God has no right to a pang of grief or a tear of sorrow from anybody, especially from those who have accepted Christ and what He has done for them. Yet Christians have been, and often are, afflicted and made to suffer in this world more than sinners. Hence Christ's sacrifice either was not designed to pay all the debt, or it failed to a certain extent in accomplishing the object for which it was made, or else the Father's wrath waxed uncontrollably hot, and He determined to have additional satisfaction by inflicting torture on those whom He had adopted as his own children, and whose debt had been once fully paid. In either case the common theory falls to the ground.

Again, it is assumed and taught that Christ has become our Advocate at the bar of God, in which character He is represented as interceding with the Father to spare sinners and not pour out his wrath upon them. But certainly it is a terrible reflection on the character of God to imply even, as the very presence of an Advocate *would* imply, that Jehovah was inclined to violate not only his

word, but his oath also, by refusing to keep his part of the most solemn contract ever entered into in time or eternity. Just think of it! That a God with whom a lie is impossible, who is truth itself and love itself, needs an Advocate or Intercessor to plead with Him to do as He has sworn to do. As though his memory were treacherous, and He needed to be reminded of his agreement lest He forget it; or as though his wrath had grown hungry again, and He was in danger of allowing it to break out in renewed vengeance upon those whose sins had been atoned for. Either the common theory of Christ as Intercessor implies that God is liable to break his word, violate his oath by refusing to keep the agreement made with his Son, or the office of Mediator is an absurdity, and the Mediator himself a mere figure-head or dignitary with nothing to do.

The whole theory is a gross misconception of the truth on this subject, encompassed with insurmountable difficulties, and filled with absurdities with which sober reason can have no fellowship, and with which the Sacred Scriptures rightly interpreted are at utter variance. You can never get the true meaning of the office of Mediator and Intercessor while you look upon Christ as one Person interceding with the Father as another Person, imploring Him to have mercy on sinners; for we must never forget that there is only one

God, as the Bible declares and human reason affirms. Now, "a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, but God is ONE." "For there is *one* God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus." The idea is, that God is one, man is the other, and Christ in his Divine Humanity is the Mediator, the conjoining medium between God and men. "Through that Divine Human in which Jehovah dwells, as the soul in the body, God approaches man with his light and life; and through the same medium man draws near to God in filial confidence, crying, 'Abba, Father,' and receives in himself the Father's light and life, and thus God and men who by this 'way' come to Him, are no longer at variance, but are in agreement or *at-one* with each other. The influx of Divine life with messages of Divine love and wisdom is constantly flowing from God, who is Love itself, into the souls of men. It flows from the infinite Jehovah, who dwells bodily in the glorified Human, as the light and heat of the sun flow forth giving life to every living thing in the material universe."

Now, descending in our reasoning from the Infinite to the finite, we may use the ocean cable as an illustration of human mediation. Europe and America are separated by the Atlantic Ocean. The cable brings them together. It unites them by becoming a perfect connecting medium, so as to

bring the two widely separated countries into direct and speedy communication with each other. As the electric current with the messages it bears flows through the cable from shore to shore, so the messages of our Heavenly Father's love flow through his glorified Human to his children on earth. So with the telephone. By this medium two persons separated by many miles can converse in audible tones as though present in the same room. The telephone is the mediator or medium of communication between the two parties. It removes the obstacles, so to speak, of time and space, and enables them to commune with each other. Now the limitless ocean of Infinity intervened between God and men. Communication was cut off. "God could not draw near to man and not consume him with his ineffable brightness. It was impossible for man to approach God because of the perversity of his will and the benighted condition of his understanding. But, by clothing Himself with the human and making that human Divine—one with Himself—God could communicate his Divine life to man in such a manner as to effect a reconciliation. He could pour his Divine love into man's will and his Divine wisdom into his understanding, so as to enable man to draw near to God." Therefore in the glorified human, in which the Infinite Essence of God dwells, the reconciliation of man to God is

effected. “ For God is in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.” This mediation of Christ will never cease, for “ He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” The Divine Human is, and ever will be, Jehovah’s arm of strength by which He reaches down and saves his creatures. It is God’s right hand of power. It is the hand that sways his sceptre of universal dominion by which his kingdom ruleth over all.

As one of the effects of the reconciliation thus accomplished between God and men, this prayer ascends daily from millions of human hearts: “ Thy kingdom come, thy will be done as in the heavens, so on earth.” Now, as an eloquent preacher of these glorious truths has well said, “ How beautiful, how harmonious, how reasonable, and how scriptural this view of the atonement, ascension, and mediation of Jesus Christ! There is in it no angry God; no wrathful Father satiating his vengeance on his innocent Son; no innocent victim suffering in the stead of the guilty; no legal subterfuges or technicalities; no impossible transfer of righteousness to the unrighteous, or of sin to the sinless; no division of the absolute personal unity of God; no perversion of the Sacred Scriptures; and no insult to the sober reason and common sense of mankind.”

The doctrine of the ascension and mediation of Christ as here presented, blends in sweet harmony

all the Scriptures bearing upon the subject, and solves many perplexing difficulties inseparably connected with the common view concerning it. There are no unreasonable statements which we are compelled to believe, and no impenetrable mysteries we are forbidden to explore. The whole subject is clear and lucid to such especially as are in the Spirit. It shines like the light, scattering the darkness; distills as the dew, permeating universal humanity; it soothes, like the warm embrace of loving sympathy, the stricken ones of earth; it delivers the oppressed, opens the eyes of the blind, and they see the glory of God; it unstops the ears of the deaf, and they hear in the Spirit the sweet melodies of heaven; it feeds the hungry with bread and they are satisfied; it gives water to the thirsty and they thirst no more; it gives healing to the sick and life to the dead; it gives power to the faint, strength to the weak, and rest, sweet rest, to the weary; it brings near those that are far off, making them nigh by the blood of Christ; it reveals the commandments of the Lord as the path of life and the way of salvation, and enables us to walk therein with delight; it gives us joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away. Finally, it proclaims the acceptable year of the Lord, and sounds the herald notes of joy, which shall be to all people "peace on earth and good will to men."



IV.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

NO subject is fraught with more momentous concern to us, as intelligent and rational beings, than the fact that we are soon to leave this world and enter upon another state of existence, of which we know by experience absolutely nothing. While on earth, we are, so to speak, entombed in a material body of flesh and blood, hedged about, cramped, hampered by the limitations of time and space. It is necessary that we should be clothed with a body homogeneous with the world in which we live. We are in a material world, and are, therefore, clothed with a material body. A spiritual body would not serve our purpose in the world of matter, nor could these natural bodies serve us in the spiritual world. It is impossible to get a correct knowledge of this subject while we confound natural and spiritual things. We cannot look at spiritual realities with the natural eye. We cannot see anything spiritual with our material organs of sense. Everything in the spiritual world is in obscurity to the perceptions of flesh and blood. This was where the Jews made a fatal mistake at our Lord's first advent. The idea of a

mere temporal kingdom engrossed their minds and darkened their understandings. Their opinion was a preconceived opinion. It came of Rabbinical teaching. It became the tradition of the elders, sacredly cherished from generation to generation. Every prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah was interpreted in its literal sense. The knowledge of spiritual things was lost. From first to last, from the learned Rabbi or Doctor of the Law to the humblest Jewish worshiper, the people had gross material ideas of everything spiritual. Even the disciples for a long time cherished only the idea of Messiah's kingdom as a temporal and earthly kingdom. They never gave up that notion till after our Lord's resurrection. It is extremely difficult to empty the mind of what pre-occupies it, and divest the thought of the particular internal quality with which it comes invested from the will and understanding. If the will is perverse or the understanding not enlightened, correspondingly the thought or mental conceptions will be in obscurity. In such case it is the groping of a blind man to find his way, or the effort of a cripple to compete in a race. It is impossible from a false premise to reach right conclusions, or to gather good fruit from a corrupt tree. Error may have the appearance of truth, and evil that of good. But it is only in appearance, and never in reality..

“ There are two errors into which we have fallen in our interpretation of the Scriptures, concerning death and the resurrection. First, in regarding the death of the material body as the result of sin, and in part its penalty; and, second, in supposing the resurrection from the dead to mean the resuscitation of the *natural* body. A great deal is said in the Scriptures concerning death, but it is seldom spoken of as referring to the dissolution of the material body. ‘ In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,’ is a statement of what actually occurred in Adam’s experience; yet he did not die as to his physical body in the day that he ate the forbidden fruit. It is a statement of a literal truth in every one’s experience to-day. In the day we sin, we die. Every man dies the day he eats of the fruit which is forbidden. He died then as he dies to-day. Sin and death are inseparably conjoined. But the death spoken of, and which man suffers as the result of transgression, is a very different thing from the putting off of this earthly house of our tabernacle. It is spiritual death. It is the death of purity, the death of righteousness, the death of true thoughts and good affections, the death of all heavenly qualities, the death of love toward God and the neighbor. This is the terrible death usually spoken of in the Sacred Scriptures as the penalty of transgression. Man sins every day that he transgresses

the Divine Commandments, and dies every day that he sins."

That the above is a true description of the real death in which man is involved, may be seen by comparison of opposites. By sin, impurity enters and purity dies; unrighteousness prevails and righteousness dies. As falsity is confirmed, truth departs from the soul. Evil predominates, and good dies in the exact ratio. As the principles of hell thrive, the qualities of a heavenly origin and character are extinguished. As enmity toward God and hatred toward man fill the soul, love to God and the neighbor dies. So in the exact ratio in which men sin does death ensue. The truth of this is confirmed by universal observation. The man in whom evil reigns supreme, is dead to all those qualities which belong to genuine spiritual life. It may be truthfully said of him that "he is dead while he liveth." It is a terrible death. The dissolution of the material body can have no effect upon the real man. But the death illustrated above is the death of the man himself. It is the death "whose pang outlasts the fleeting breath." It is the process by which devils are made. You say of such a man, "he is a perfect devil," or, "he is a devil incarnate." He is in the human form and in a material body. But everything that makes an angel has died within him, and only that which makes a devil lives. Of such a man the

Scriptures say, "He is dead." It is from this death the Lord came to save us. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John x. 10.) "For thou hast delivered my soul from death." (Ps. cxvi. 8.) "But if the wicked will turn from all his sin which he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall *not* die." (Ezek. xviii. 21.) "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die." (Ibid. ver. 27, 28.) "Make you a new heart and a right spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ver. 31.) "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." (Ver. 32.) "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 15.) "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life; and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John viii. 24.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that

hear shall live." (Ver. 25.) "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (Ibid. vi. 47.) "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." (John vi. 50, 51.) "If a man keep my saying, he shall *never see death.*" (Ibid. viii. 51.) "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were *dead*, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall *never die.*" (Ibid. ix. 25, 26.) "And you hath He quickened who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." (Eph. ii. 1.)

Any one of ordinary intelligence can see that the life and death mentioned in the above quotations, cannot refer to the life and death of the material body. For we know that the physical organism of the wicked man often lives long after the spiritual part, which is the man himself, has died. And the good and holy die as to their material bodies, although our Lord asserts over and over again, that such shall never die; showing most conclusively that the death of the body is not meant when the Scriptures speak of death. When physical death is rightly viewed, and in the light of spiritual truth, we cannot fail to recognize the wisdom and mercy of God in providing for the passing away of these corruptible bodies

of flesh and blood. We discover in it an infinitely wise and beneficent operation of that divine order which runs harmoniously through all the Creator's works. According to the revelations of geological science, long ages before man was created death existed. Some entire species of animals and plants had died and become extinct before man appeared. In a material body, man is so hemmed in by limitations as to prevent development beyond a certain point; and then, according to the course of nature, he begins to decline, becomes enfeebled, and finally throws off this cumbersome body forever. It is a merciful arrangement of the Creator. It is a token of his infinite love, and not an exhibition of his wrath. It is a happy deliverance, and not a punishment of sin. It is redemption from the power of corruption, and not a visitation of judgment. If man had never sinned, it would have been the same. Eternal life could not have been realized in a material body. He would of necessity have been imprisoned in this natural world. He could never have ascended to heaven, nor could he have explored the universe of God. He would have clanked the chains of physical bondage forever.

God created man for the enjoyment of eternal life begun in the material body, progressively developed in the spiritual world and completed amid the glory of the heavens. Step by step he rises,

as little by little he overcomes his evils and becomes receptive of good and truth from the Lord. And when his reformation is complete and his regeneration fully effected, man may be said to have risen from the dead, made alive again by the power of God. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; for over such the second death hath no power." (Rev. xx. 6.) "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) We know God when we love Him, and we love Him when we keep his commandments and walk in his truth. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John ii. 3, 4.) Man was created for something infinitely better, grander, and nobler than could ever be realized in the material world. Hence, the necessity of the death of the natural body in order to the full enjoyment of spiritual life, and the high destiny that infinite Love has made possible in the world to come.

God never designed man to live forever fettered by the hopeless bondage of natural limitations, and clogged by material flesh and blood. We begin our career in a natural body. It was a necessary arrangement according to the perfections of divine order. But it was only for a time. When

the purpose of its organization is accomplished, it is laid aside as no longer of use. Do not therefore imagine, when your loved ones die, that God is angry with you, or that in wrath He took them away. It is not so. If preachers tell you so, do not believe it. "God is love." "And having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.) Paul said, "To die is gain." And he expressed a desire to depart and be with Christ, which he regarded as far better than continued imprisonment in the natural body. (Phil. i. 21-23.) The wise man said, "Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth." Peter called it the "putting off this my tabernacle," and Paul contrasted it with our spiritual body, which he terms "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1; 2 Peter i. 14.)

Having shown what is understood by death in the Scriptures, and that the dissolution of the natural body is not the result of transgression, but a wise and merciful provision of Divine Providence, we come now to consider the resurrection of our spiritual body. The Apostle says: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv. 44.) "There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial." (Ver. 40.) That is, heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. The earthly is that which we now have. The heavenly is that which

we shall have when we put off the earthly, if our inner life is heavenly. Hence that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; afterwards that which is spiritual. Therefore he says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither can corruption inherit incorruption." Every one knows that this material body is corruptible, and that it turns to corruption.

We need not, therefore, speculate as to how this body, when dissolved and mingled with the elements, is to be raised up ; for it has returned to dust forever. It has accomplished its mission, and we shall need it no more. Something infinitely better is in store for us. God has given us an indestructible, incorruptible, spiritual body. As we have already seen, a material body would be a useless, cumbersome burden in the spiritual world. There is no such thing in the heavens, and never can be. It would be impossible for God himself to make any better organism out of material substances than He has made in the construction of our natural body. Hence, if a material body were needed in the other world, God would have made this immortal. And then it ought to be apparent to every intelligent person that it would be impossible to construct a spiritual organism out of a natural body. The Creator does not evolve spirit from matter ; nor does He create spiritual things from material elements. "That which is born of

the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 6.) Flesh is never made into spirit, nor is that which is spiritual ever transformed into that which is natural. A uniform system of divine order marks every department of the Creator's operations throughout the illimitable universe. He never deviates from his own established laws of order. The spiritual body is *no part* of the natural body. Upon the hypothesis that it *is*, what particular part of the natural does the spiritual take on? In the name of reason, tell me what part of this poor body of corruption does the spiritual take on? In what department of these natural elements lies the spiritual germ? Is there a man in all Israel that can answer this question? What part of this corruptible body is used in the construction of a spiritual body? Do not evade the question by hiding behind an assumed mystery. This word "mystery" is a wonderful scapegoat to bear away the false subterfuges of an irrational and unphilosophical theology. It eclipses the renowned goat of Masonry altogether, as a mere creation of the fancy. Upon the hypothesis that the spiritual is made from the natural body, the spiritual must itself become material; in which case there would be no advancement on the part of man, but in reality retrogression on God's part, and a subversion of his own divine order.

No: the earthly passes away to give place to the

heavenly. The natural dies and the spiritual is resurrected. The one is for time, the other for eternity. The one was designed to be taken down and removed like the Jewish Tabernacle, the other to remain as a permanent abode, symbolized by the Temple at Jerusalem. The natural was typified by the first covenant, which, being only of an external character, was designed to serve a given purpose for a time and then be done away with forever. The spiritual was symbolized by the new covenant, which, being internal, was to continue eternal and unchangeable. So the spiritual body is indestructible, and hence immortal, and therefore not material. It is adapted to the spiritual world as the natural body is fitted for the material world. It is the everlasting house of the soul, eternal in the heavens. It is the clothing of the spirit, that which gives it form and substance. It is the undying spiritual organism through which the spirit performs its functions in the spiritual world. Here the soul is hampered, and it is impossible to bring this natural body into harmony with the laws of spiritual life, so that it shall carry out in every particular the desires of the mind and fulfill the purposes of the soul. We will to be with our distant kindred ; but, encumbered as we are with a material body, we are of necessity subject to the limitations of time and space. It may be we can go to them ; but to do so, a jour-

ney, sometimes through thousands of miles and many weary days and nights, has to be endured. To the spiritual body there are no such limitations; no hindrances or obstructions. On the wings of thought we can traverse the universe, and never weary of the journey. There are no railroad monopolies, no extortionate rates or other obstacles to embarrass or hinder intercommunication between worlds.

God created man that he might be filled with the delights of His infinite love and wisdom. He has left nothing undone that is calculated in the least to enhance human happiness. As man becomes receptive of his love and wisdom, he journeys back to his Father's house. A warm welcome awaits him on his return. He begins his home-ward journey here. In subduing and overcoming the evils of his carnal nature, he is moulding and fashioning his spiritual body in which he is to dwell forever. As the earthly food we eat is assimilated and goes to form and nourish these material bodies, so the bread from heaven, which is the Lord himself, or the truths of his love and wisdom, goes to form and nourish our spiritual bodies. Our spiritual bodies are all the while being fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. They are subject to the laws of spiritual development as our natural bodies are subject to the laws of physical development. God does not make a

material body by an arbitrary fiat of his will, nor does He construct a spiritual body by any such process. Man does not, of his own volition, move out of the old house until he has a new one ready for occupancy. So we may reasonably suppose that God will not allow this earthly tabernacle to be torn down, until He has prepared for us a better house—one not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It would not be in accordance with the infinite love and wisdom of God to turn his helpless children out of their earthly house, as homeless wanderers unsheltered and unclothed, without form or substance, roaming in the vast immensity for thousands of years, alike unknowing and unknown, until He could get a spiritual body ready for them. He does not do things by halves—getting one-half of the man ready some thousands of years before He begins the other half. Neither is man divisible—a part of him in eternity's shoreless realm, and a part of him on earth, returned to dust whence he came, and scattered to the four winds of heaven; and after untold ages have passed away, the two parts to be brought together again and made into one man!

I tell you there is nothing Godlike in such a proceeding. God does not do things in that way. He completes what He undertakes before He leaves it. He never leaves anything half finished. Man is no more divisible than God himself. We fall

into error on this subject by our materialistic tendencies. Everything in the Sacred Scriptures concerning our resurrection from the dead, we read with a materialistic idea in the mind. When the Lord says, "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth," we think of nothing but the material body in the tomb. And our thought is, that *it* is to rise from the grave as a natural yet glorified body.

We read the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and are confirmed in the materialistic idea of the resurrection. We seem unable to see anything else taught therein, than the literal resurrection of our material bodies. But we have already shown that a spiritual body cannot be constructed out of material elements, and that a material body has no existence in the spiritual world. That it is impossible, in the very nature of things, for flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom of God. The real thought is, that our natural bodies are sown and return to the dust whence they came, and our spiritual bodies are raised from the dead. The one is sown in corruption, the other is raised in incorruption. But the spiritual body is not and never was any part of the corruptible body. Depend upon it, whenever the resurrection occurs it is a spiritual body that is raised. We have no further use for a material organism. It has been laid aside forever as a useless and cumbersome

burden. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body." The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, but involved himself in spiritual death; hence it is said: "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit;" therefore the Apostle says, "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;" and again: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." There are no Scriptures, when rightly understood, which teach the resurrection of the material body. Besides, the gross literal interpretation of those passages in the Word that seem to teach it, has given an impetus to infidel sentiments that has grown to huge dimensions; and for the fact that thinking men are constantly losing respect for the Bible as a Divine book, the theological teaching of the age is largely responsible.

Biblical expositors have insisted on a method of interpretation that in many instances outrages reason and insults the common sense of mankind. A blind, unreasoning credulity characterizes the Christian world of to-day. Ignorance of all spiritual truth prevails to a great extent. It is the throne of ecclesiastical tyranny and oppression. It is the field in which the great red dragon of the

Apocalypse feeds and fattens. External forms and ceremonies abound; theories prevail, and creeds are multiplied. It is impossible to derive spiritual life from the dead husks of the literal interpretation of the Word. Hence the noxious fruits of a dead faith are often seen in the blindness of a zeal not according to knowledge, and the utter absence of charity from the life. Men have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. "They profess to know God, but in their works deny Him, being unto every good work reprobate." False ideas concerning God lead to erroneous conceptions concerning every doctrine revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. That of the resurrection forms no exception to the rule.

Now, in conclusion, let us illustrate the absurdity of the literal materialistic idea of the subject before us. A man that lives to the age of seventy, according to modern science, has had ten bodies—bodies of material flesh and blood. Every day that he lives some particles of his body pass away and mingle with the elements about him. During his last illness most of his remaining body passes away. He dies, and what is then left of that organic form passes away in like manner. It turns to dust or escapes in gases, enters into other organisms of plants, trees, and animals, passing through a thousand transmutations. And yet our modern theologian will tell you that when the last trumpet

sounds, God will follow up each particle of those ten bodies, running through those thousand transmutations, and resurrect that man's material body, which He will glorify and spiritualize as a fit habitation for that man's spirit that passed to the great unknown thousands of years before. And you are called an infidel if you decline to believe such a theory—a theory in direct conflict with reason, science and common sense, and wholly without Scriptural authority.

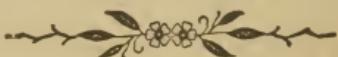
A few years ago, Mr. P. P. Bliss, the sweet singer, and his wife perished in the railroad disaster at Ashtabula, Ohio. The car in which they went down took fire, and they were burned up. Not so much as a bunch of keys was found to evidence that they ever lived. The ashes of their bodies were carried down the stream. Now the common theory is, that God will gather those particles, although they have all mingled with the waters of the river, and on the morning of the resurrection will reunite them to those dear souls that ascended to God on that fearful night. Just as though it were necessary for God to follow up that particular dust for the purpose of making another material body! And if it is a spiritual body that is to be resurrected, then certainly He would not search in the grave of corruption, nor yet in the waters of the river and sea, to find the elements out of which to construct it.

But that there is a spiritual body that rises out of the material as from a tomb, is evidenced by the fact that Moses and Elias who had died or cast off their mortal bodies centuries before, were seen with Christ upon the mount of transfiguration in human form, and in their spiritual bodies, of course, for they were recognized by the disciples, and they conversed with the Lord. In the Revelation, John testifies that he saw "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." (Rev. vii. 9.) He also saw "the souls of those who had been martyred for the testimony of Jesus." (Ibid. xx. 4.) It were folly to suppose that they were mere ghosts, without form or substance, floating in the great immensity. They were complete in all the perfection of their spiritual bodies. They were seen, not as naked spirits, but clothed, exercising all the members of their spiritual bodies, standing upon their feet, holding palms in their hands, and speaking with their tongues—which certainly could not be true of a phantom or a formless spirit without substance or parts. Of what possible use could a material body be to those happy, perfect, glorified intelligences? It would be to them like the oppressive gloominess of a prison-cell. It would hush every glad song among the angels and annihilate heav-

only joy among the redeemed, were they to be informed that they must return to the narrow confines of a material body, and be subject to the limitations which of necessity environ such a state of existence.

Bear in mind that we do not deny the resurrection of *man* from the dead, for the Scriptures everywhere teach the doctrine. "We have simply undertaken to show that what is called death in the Bible is spiritual death, and that man's resurrection from that condition is a spiritual resurrection both of body and soul; and hence his material body, being of no possible use in the spiritual world, is cast off forever." "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxiii. 28.)

Let the chaff of mere human theories, speculations, and preconceived notions, with all the commandments and traditions of men, be separated from the true doctrine of the Word, that we may all be taught of God; and being taught of Him, that we may walk in the light as He is in the light, that there may be no occasion of stumbling in us, but that we may stand complete in all the will of God, ever growing in grace and increasing in the knowledge of God, and in conformity to his will.





V.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THE second coming of the Lord is a subject on which there is a wide difference of opinion among Christians. It is regarded as an open question upon which people may honestly differ. Those who hold that it is to occur before the millennium are termed Premillenarians, while those who think that the millennium is to precede his coming are called Postmillenarians. The latter regard the thousand years' reign of Christ as spiritual, consisting in the triumph of Christianity and the conversion of the whole world to Christ. At the end of the thousand years' reign, He is to come to this earth to execute the last judgment, raise the dead, welcome the righteous to heaven, send the wicked to hell, and burn up the material heavens and earth, and put an end to Time itself. The former hold that the Lord's coming is to precede the millennium, and is to be in person. That He is to come in the literal clouds of heaven, in a material form, stand upon the Mount of Olives, at which time the mountain shall cleave in two, forming a vast plain on which the literal Jerusalem

shall be rebuilt, and that Christ is to sit literally on the throne of David at Jerusalem, and reign over the nations of the earth for a thousand years.

One of the prime factors in this theory is "the restoration of the Jews." They are to be gathered out of all the nations of the earth, and to be restored to Palestine. At this time the righteous dead of every age and clime are to be raised from their graves in material bodies, and the living saints are to be changed into the same condition. The wicked who may be living at that time are to be destroyed, and none of the unholy will be raised from the dead until after the thousand years expire. Then the last judgment will occur; the wicked will be raised and sentenced to eternal death, and the righteous will ascend with Christ to heaven, leaving behind them the material heavens and earth wrapped in devouring flames.

Just how the saints are to ascend to heaven in their material bodies has never been very satisfactorily explained. It is one of the "great mysteries" we are not allowed to investigate. If they are resurrected in material bodies, then they are in material organizations forever; for there is no Scripture warrant for believing in any change of the body *after* the resurrection. And if in material bodies, they must be in bodies of flesh and blood, and hence can never inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. xv.) So the great mystery when

sifted is found to be contrary alike to Scripture, reason, and common sense. And they who hold this belief, look into the material heavens for the signs of the Lord's coming. They watch the sun, moon, and stars, to see them gather blackness, turn to blood, and fall to the earth.

Some believe in the sleep of the soul with the body in the tomb, the literal resurrection of both body and soul at the second advent, the eternal annihilation of the wicked, and the everlasting reign of the saints upon this material globe. They fix the very day when the Lord is to come. This has been done many times. Miller fixed the time as long ago as 1843. He was mistaken, as many others have been. The Lord did not come at that time. A half-score days, more or less, have been designated since. The thing has been figured to a nicety. People have disposed of their worldly effects, arrayed themselves in their ascension robes, and stood the livelong night waiting for the Lord to come in the natural clouds. But He did not come. They were mistaken again as to time; and they will all find at last that they have been mistaken, also, as to the manner or nature of his coming. Depend upon it, He will never come in a material body, and in the literal clouds of heaven, to reign on a temporal throne in this material world. He says: "My kingdom is not of this world." (John xviii. 36.) It is neither material nor temporal;

hence all interpretations of the Scriptures concerning that event, from a temporal or material standpoint, are erroneous, and can never receive their fulfillment in that sense.

It matters not how much Scripture may be quoted in confirmation of such a theory; for, interpreted in its strictly literal sense, the truth cannot be known, falsity is confirmed, and errors are established. The inevitable result is to destroy faith in the divine authority of the Word itself. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Cor. iii. 6.) Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. (2 Cor. ii. 14.) "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; . . . the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John vi. 63.) It is by this principle of literal interpretation that all the errors which have infested the church for the last fifteen hundred years, or since the promulgation of the Nicene creed (A. D. 327), have crept in. And in proportion as error enters, truth departs. Those things which God has separated are married, and those which He united are divorced. Thus we have an inverted condition of things by which falsity has the appearance of truth, and evil appears as good, and darkness as light; and the love of self and the world is made to appear as good religion, even a zeal for God. The devotion of the people of the church at large is largely in the direction of external splendor, gorgeous ritu-

alism and empty formalism. It is a characteristic of the last days of the church that men shall have "a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." (2 Tim. iii. 5.)

The various and conflicting theories which have given birth to the multiplied creeds of men, have all been drawn from, and confirmed by, a low and sensuous interpretation of the Word. Hence the remark is often heard that "you can prove anything by the Bible." And so you can, taking it merely in the sense of the letter. And thus every sect in Christendom quotes passages from the Scriptures in support of its dogmas. The Scriptures from first to last reveal the Lord and his church. They reveal everywhere the unity of God and the oneness of his people. They neither sanction a division of the Godhead nor of the church. They reveal no multiplicity of systems. They sanction no errors, and foster no system in conflict with their own beautiful harmony and with the sober reason of man. Understood aright, they are grand in conception, divine in origin, harmonious in doctrine, and luminous throughout. If you go deep enough beneath the surface or mere letter, you will find the Lord shining in the brightness of his glory, and reigning in matchless power. You will comprehend the nature of his kingdom, the spirit of his Word, the infinity of his grace, and the purpose of both his first and second advent.

You will recognize his second coming in the clouds of heaven, as the Lord coming to you in the opened Word, made luminous and bright to your enlightened understanding. The clouds of heaven are the Divine Word in the letter, or in its most external form. Coming in the clouds of heaven represents the opening of the Word in its internal or spiritual sense, by which the Lord himself is plainly revealed in or through the clouds of the letter. Thus you behold Him in his divine glory, and feel as never before the power of his divine truth. The clouds lift, and the Sun of righteousness shines in the fullness of his divine love and wisdom. The external opens, and Zion's peerless King stands disclosed in all his glory. The eternal gates of pearl swing upon their noiseless hinges, and the Lord sits on the great white throne, King of kings and Lord of lords. The Word in its letter reveals the jasper walls, the gates of pearl, the sapphire foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones, the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven. The spiritual sense reveals what is within the walls; the streets of gold, the white throne and Him that sits upon it, the river of the water of life, the tree of life that yields its twelve manner of fruits, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; and all the precious things of heaven and the church, for these are all spiritual things. He who

worships the Lord Jesus Christ, and has no other Gods before Him, dwells within the jasper walls and walks the golden streets. Entering livingly into the spiritual sense of the Word is passing through the gates into the Holy City.

Thus Jesus Christ comes the second time without sin unto salvation. He comes, not as once He came in lowly form, and clothed with material flesh, but in all the unveiled glory of his divine perfections, as the everlasting "fullness of Him who filleth all in all." Divine Love itself, He comes to drive enmity from the human breast. A Sun, He comes in the resplendent effulgence of divine light, to scatter the darkness of sin, error, and superstition. He comes to open the eyes of the blind; to unstopp the ears of the deaf; to pour the oil of joy and consolation into sorrowing hearts; to dispel falsity; to reveal truth; to break every yoke of bondage; to proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof.

Thus a new era dawns. A new world begins. A new spiritual force is abroad in the earth. Ignorance gives place to enlightenment; superstition, to a clearer revelation of truth; a blind and unreasoning credulity, to a clear and rational faith. The past century has shaken up the whole valley of dry bones. The Spirit, like the wind, is blowing upon them. Bone comes to bone. They are being clothed with flesh. The Spirit of

God will soon enter into them, and they will stand upon their feet, "an exceeding great army." The improvements of the past hundred years have burst upon the world like the sun out of midnight darkness. The march is onward. The force is irresistible. It cannot be stayed. It is the Lord Jehovah walking in the greatness of his strength. The whole world is being stirred as never before. The nations are moved. The peoples of earth are aroused. They have caught the inspiration of freedom. They thirst for liberty. The cry is for knowledge. Theories no longer satisfy. Cold, dead abstractions are as stones in the place of bread. The streams of creed and dogma are being dried up. The hungry want bread. The thirsty long for the living waters. The sorrowing millions demand comfort. The cry of the weary and heavy-laden is for rest. The spiritual part of man craves nourishment. Man is in darkness, and needs light. He would have doubt give place to certainty. He would know the hitherto unknown. He would have the obscure made plain. Men are tired of generalities and guess-work, and demand something positive and certain. Theories are being tested and systems tried. "Revelation, science and reason form the three-fold test of all religious truth." All theories must harmonize with this, or they are not true. Any system in seeming harmony with Revelation,

which is at the same time in antagonism with science or reason, is a system which cannot endure. You can prove all things true or false by this rule. Any theory founded on science or reason which is not in harmony with either the letter or spirit of Revelation, is also without a secure foundation. The attempt to antagonize science or reason with Revelation is atheistic. The effort to interpret Revelation in opposition to either science or reason is folly. The Lord Jehovah is the Author of them all, and the three bear their united testimony to the Divine Source whence they emanate. It is in this manner and by this rule that we are to "prove all things," while we "hold fast that which is good." Tested by this means, whole systems of theology that have been venerated for centuries, are proven to be at variance both with reason and science. Weighed in the balance, they are found wanting, and are to be set aside as untrue, and hence are of no further use. Revelation rightly interpreted never opposes reason or conflicts with science.

This standard of interpretation will constitute a marked feature of the New Age, controlling the investigation of religious truth and scientific research. Hitherto the growth of scientific knowledge has been far in advance of the acquisitions of religious knowledge. In the coming age the latter will keep pace with the former. They

will go hand in hand, while reason will accompany them as an ever-welcome companion. The sifting process will go on. The chaff will be separated from the wheat and falsity from the truth. Mankind will come more and more into the knowledge of the truth, and thence into freedom. Ignorance is bondage; enlightenment is liberty. Intellectual darkness is oppression's native land, while spiritual perversity is Satan's harvest field. The coming of the Lord in his opened Word will dispel the darkness, overthrow oppression, destroy perversity, overcome the wicked one and cast him out. Divine love will come more and more into the hearts of the people, and divine light into their understandings. A purer and closer reciprocal relation will exist between them. The love of self will give place to the love of the Lord, and the love of the world to that of the neighbor. Obedience to the commandments of God will be the law of the Christian's life, and the gospel of his salvation. It will be the way of pleasantness and the path of peace. He will walk in it with ever-increasing delight. It will grow brighter and brighter, and "shine more and more unto the perfect day." There will be continual growth in all spiritual attainments. "Increasing in the knowledge of God" will be a daily experience. The mind will broaden; the soul will expand; the desires enlarge and the whole life glow with divine love and

wisdom. Each century will become more luminous with the light of divine truth. Each generation will advance to higher conceptions, grander attainments, and fuller realizations of every divine excellence than its predecessor. The obstructions that now lie in the way will be removed. Prejudice will vanish. Narrow-minded bigotry will pass like a cloud from off the spiritual horizon. The throne of ecclesiastical tyranny will be demolished. Persecutions for conscience' sake will cease. Infidelity and skepticism will gradually pass away. A purer political economy will pervade the nations. The conflict between labor and capital will be at an end. The love of money, which is said to be "the root of all evil," will be supplanted by the love of use. Worldly gain will no longer be the chief end and aim of life. The various relations existing between the human family will be harmoniously adjusted according to the divine standard of right. The oppressor will oppress no more. The poor will no longer be antagonized against the rich. The rich will be poorer in this world's goods, but infinitely richer in heavenly acquisitions. The condition of the poor will be bettered in every respect. No man will suffer for the necessities of life. Harrowing care and anxiety will no longer weigh upon the spirit. Human woes will lessen as divine benedictions descend in showers of blessing upon the people.

The love of truth will increase. The appetite for spiritual food will be stimulated more and more as time rolls on. Evil desires will gradually be subdued. The weak will receive strength. The tempted will overcome. The fallen will be lifted up. The wanderer will be restored. The friendless will have friends. The outcasts will be gathered in. The ignorant will be instructed. The whole earth will see the salvation of our God, and man will love the Lord with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. The narrow limits of religious bigotry are already being passed. The proscriptiveness of ecclesiastical intolerance is a characteristic of a dead church. This will have no place in the church of the future. New views of truth will open up in endless progression. The dead will be left to bury their dead. The living as they go will proclaim the kingdom of God. That kingdom will be within them. Man will not only be in the church, but the church will be in him. Theory will give place to practice; words to deeds; professions to actualities; and assumptions to practical demonstrations.

The Scriptures everywhere abound in declarations concerning the coming of this Church. It is called the millennium; the second coming of the Lord; the reign of a thousand years; the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven.

The glimmerings of the coming day are plainly discernible. The signs of his advent are fulfilled. The night of error and falsity has darkened the sun in the heavens. The moon has refused to give her light, and the stars have fallen from heaven to the earth, in the perversion of holy truth, the confirmation of error, and the aggrandizement of self and sect. The abomination that maketh desolate, foretold in Daniel xii. 11, was actually set up in the year A. D. 467, under Pope Simplicius, and fully established under Anastasius II., A. D. 497.

“Up to 467, the first forty-five successors of St. Peter were chosen by the laity and clergy together. The voice of the laity in the choice of a Pope ends here, and the abomination begins. In the year 497, church and state are fully one, and the abomination is made permanent. Henceforth the freedom of the laity either to think or act in religious matters, is obliterated.” “The destruction of the true idea of the Divine unity and the division of the Godhead into three distinct Persons, by which the supreme Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ is obliterated from the mind, *is* the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, and which received its full and firm establishment in the year 497.” “This was the last year of the reign of Pope Anastasius, and the beginning of an era of 1260 years of mental and spiritual darkness, and of

ecclesiastical tyranny and oppression, without a parallel in history; and which, according to the chronological record of Daniel, ended A. D. 1757."

Who cannot see what a marked change has transpired in our world since that date? The union of church and state no longer exists except to a very limited extent. The march of the nations has been toward freedom from mental bondage and religious oppression. Old theories are exploded. Venerated customs are abolished. Bonds are sundered, shackles struck off, and manacles rent asunder. The doctrine of three Persons in God is rejected, and the Supreme Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ is again proclaimed from many pulpits, and scattered by the press like autumn leaves over the earth.

Almost simultaneously with the ending of the abomination spoken of above, and the promulgation of the true doctrine of the Lord, the wonderful era of improvements in the arts and sciences and in the general diffusion of knowledge began. More has been done in a century than in the eighteen hundred years preceding. Many now living can remember when there were no steamboats, when the use of steam was wholly unknown. Most of us in middle life can remember the birth of railroads, telegraphs, and the various uses of electricity, ocean cables, telephones, and the thousand and one improvements in every

department of life. People have often wondered why all these things have developed within the last hundred years. They have not known that it was the beginning of a New Age, the commencement of a New Dispensation; nor have they understood the relation which the ending of the abomination in 1757, sustains to what we see around us to-day. Those who are spiritually blind cannot see, and those who are ignorant cannot understand that relation, nor the significance of its import. Now, as formerly, "the light shines in darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not." As the Jews knew not the Lord at his first advent, so the professing church in its many confirmed errors and its perversions of truth, will not know Him at his second coming. And as He then came in a different manner or character from what the Jews expected, so will He come the second time in a manner that the mass of Christians have not been looking for. Our notions and theories will so blind us that we will not recognize Him at his coming, or comprehend the time of our visitation. Many are afraid to open their eyes for fear they will see. They dare not investigate, because they think investigation may compel a surrender of some cherished dogma. Evidently, they would rather the Lord would delay his coming, than that He should come in a different manner from what they have been expecting.

“Future events recorded in prophetic Scripture can never be understood until they are fulfilled. Hence the fulfillment of prophecy is God’s interpretation of it to the church. Here all the mistakes have been made in endeavoring to explain the Apocalypse. Men have assumed to foretell events, and fix times in their interpretation of this prophecy, and also that of Daniel, and thus themselves become prophets.” But until the fulfillment came, it was impossible to comprehend the meaning of those prophecies. The restored knowledge of the one God and Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the key that unlocks all the infinite treasures of wisdom contained in the spiritual sense of the Word, by which we may know that the night of a corrupted Christianity is ended, and that the morning of a new revelation of spiritual truth has already dawned upon the world.

Sir Isaac Newton, on the book of Revelation, says: “For it is a part of this prophecy that it should not be understood before the last age of the world. And therefore it makes for the credit of the prophecy that it is not yet understood. The folly of interpreters has been to foretell times and things by this prophecy; as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness, they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this and the prophecies

of the Old Testament not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and his own Providence, not the interpreter's, be then manifested to the world. For the event of things predicted many ages before, will then be a convincing argument that the world is governed by Providence. For as the few and obscure prophecies concerning Christ's first coming were for setting up the Christian religion which all nations have since corrupted; so the many and clear prophecies concerning the things to be done at Christ's second coming, are not only for predicting, but also for effecting a recovery and re-establishment of the long-lost truth, and setting up a kingdom wherein dwells righteousness. The event will prove the Apocalypse, and this prophecy thus proved and understood, will open the old prophets, and altogether make known the true religion and establish it."

Now, in the Apocalypse revealed and in the spiritual sense of the Word made known, we behold the Lord in his coming, shining out from every page of the Sacred Scriptures like the lightning which shineth from one part of heaven unto the other. "It is the great and terrible day of the Lord" to all man-invented "schemes," to all false assumptions, and erroneous systems, and human self-hood, and pride, and arrogance, and vain-glory,

and ecclesiastical hierarchies, and sectarian Babels, and denominational aggrandizement. It means the downfall of Babylon. Her time of judgment is at the Lord's coming. It is a terrible day to the beast, and the false prophet, and the great red dragon. The time of their judgment is come, and their overthrow is the redemption of the Lord's people and the establishment of his kingdom among men.

The light of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, will more and more scatter the darkness, and enlighten the nations of the earth with the effulgent glory of the Divine Love and Wisdom. It is, as yet, but the early dawn of a morning never to be succeeded by the darkness of another night. It is the beginning of an Age without end. It is immortality bursting mortal confines. It is the knowledge, and light, and love, and power of truth, reduced to practice, and operating in all the transactions and relations of life. It is the living embodiment of the commandments practically obeyed among men on earth as among the angels in heaven. It is the commencement of the "new heaven and the new earth" in which dwells righteousness, and from which all unrighteousness is excluded forever. In short, it is the coming of the Lord. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Amen.



VI.

THE JUDGMENT DAY.

WHO that has any memory of early childhood, does not remember the inexpressible fear and dread with which he was wont to listen to the awful scenes to be enacted at the last General Judgment. On a fixed day the whole human race, living and dead, were to be summoned before the judgment bar of an angry God, and pass through the legal form of a trial, not *in mass*, but each one separately, and be adjudged to heaven or to hell as the case might be. Love had turned to wrath, and the Saviour himself had become the unmerciful Judge, to pass the final sentence of everlasting death upon all save the elect, consigning them to the prison-house of an eternal burning hell. All the dead, from Adam to the end of time, were to be raised, and together with all who should be living on earth at that period, to be assembled in one vast congregation summoned to judgment. The stars of heaven were to fall to the earth, the moon was to turn to blood, and the sun to become black as sackcloth of hair. The whole material universe was to be destroyed, and the earth and everything in it was to be burned up.

All the Scriptures speaking of these things were interpreted in the strictly literal sense. And yet, in the light of the revelations of science, who that is well informed does not see the absurdity of such interpretations? It was taught and sacredly believed that all the stars of the illimitable heavens were actually to fall upon this little globe of ours. That they were as countless in number as the sand upon the seashore made no difference, so great was the credulity of the people. The Bible said they were to fall to the earth, and that was enough. Science tells us that the planet Jupiter, for instance, is nine hundred times larger than our earth; that is, that its dimensions are equal to 900 globes like this rolled into one. And yet it was to fall like the dropping of a fig to the ground. How utterly contrary to all reason and science are such interpretations of the Sacred Scriptures! They show the necessity of knowing not only what the Bible says, but also what it *means*. Its real sense does not lie on the surface, nor is it to be found in the mere letter. If it has no internal sense, and is designed to convey no meaning but what appears in its external form of expression, it lacks the stamp of infinity and the seal of God's authorship. But interpreted according to the science of correspondences and the glory is unveiled, the apparently unreasonable statements become reasonable, the seemingly conflicting portions are harmonized,

symbolism becomes an understood, beautiful, and eloquent language, and the Lord appears in its opened pages as coming in the clouds of heaven.

So those Scriptures wherein the attendant circumstances of the Judgment Day are described, when rightly understood, convey no such meaning as has been supposed. There will be no literal destruction of this material earth. There will be no falling of the stars of heaven, nor will the moon turn to blood, nor will the sun become black in the sense in which this language has been commonly understood. The man who thinks there will be, because he finds such statements in the Scriptures, does not understand the meaning of the Scriptures, and heeds not the revelations of science; and so, if he attempts to teach spiritual truth, he becomes "a blind leader of the blind."

People form their ideas of God from themselves. They think of his justice according to their notions of justice, which are often tinctured with somewhat of vengeance or revenge; and finding so often in the Bible, wrath, anger, vengeance, indignation, destruction and punishment predicated of God, they naturally think these terms applicable to Him in the same sense in which they are understood when applied to themselves. People were once (and many are still) accustomed to ascribe all their sufferings to God, and to speak of

them as though sent of Him as a punishment for their sins. Such is not the real, though it is the apparent, truth. And this explains why so much, especially of the Old Testament, contains those particular forms of expression. It is impossible for God to be actuated by anger, or hatred, or revenge, in the sense in which we understand these terms. "God is Love." Hence everything He does must be in harmony with this essential element of his character.

It is necessary that we distinguish between apparent truth and real truth. It is an apparent truth that the sun rises and sets, and in common speech we so express it; yet every intelligent person knows that it is truth only in appearance, and not in reality. It is an apparent truth that God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden; but it is true only in appearance; for the real truth is that they turned themselves out of the Eden state by their own acts. We rebel against God, violate his laws, and suffer the effects of that violation; and our sufferings seem to be a visitation of the Lord's wrath for our disobedience. Yet the Lord has not changed one iota in his feelings toward us. It is impossible that He should, for He is unchangeable. We turn away from God, and suffer, and our sufferings seem to be a punishment for our sins. When we return to Him the suffering ends, and we think God is then pro-

pitious, when, in fact, the only change has been in ourselves.

I dwell at length upon this point, for it is necessary that this distinction between truth and the *appearance* of truth be clearly established in the mind; otherwise we shall fall into very erroneous notions concerning God, and hence diverge far from the truth in our understanding of what transpires on the Judgment Day. It is generally understood that there is to be an individual and a general judgment. The common theory is, that a sort of individual judgment takes place at death, so far as the soul is concerned, by which all go at once to heaven or hell, according to the decisions of that judgment. And yet this first judgment is not final; for when time ends and the dead are raised, then these souls that have been once passed upon are to be summoned from heaven and hell, to enter once more their resurrected bodies, and arrayed in those material organisms are to receive their final sentence.

But it seems utterly devoid of reason that people who have been for thousands of years either in heaven or hell, should be called thence to be re-judged and sentenced over again. As though the omniscient One failed to comprehend to a certainty just where the unnumbered millions of human souls belonged, whether in heaven or hell; or as though some mistake had been made on their

entrance into the eternal world. I fail to see anything characteristic of infinite wisdom in such an arrangement. Of course, the theory is largely based upon the idea of the resurrection of these material bodies. As the bodies and souls of men sinned together, so, it is thought, they must be punished together; hence the necessity of a second judgment, that a reunion may be effected between each soul and its own body. But the whole theory is as unscriptural as it is unreasonable.

The judgment is no arbitrary infliction of the Divine displeasure. Every human being is examined after he enters the spiritual world, as to his quality; and his destiny is determined according to the quality of his ruling love, or according as he has obeyed or disobeyed the truth that has been made known to him. The deeds men perform in the body (together with the motives from which they do them), form the quality of life according to which they appear in the spiritual world. Hence every man receives according to his deeds, and is judged according to his works. Such as are wholly confirmed in evil, and love only a life of sin, go to their own place. There is no place for them outside of hell. That is the only place where they would feel at home. Heaven is not a *place* where the doors are opened to admit some, while others who would enter are excluded. It is a state of being. It is a state of purity, and

the impure could not breathe its atmosphere. It is a condition of holiness, and the unholy could not live in such a country. It is the realm of absolute truth, and whosoever loveth or maketh a lie cannot enter or abide there without intense suffering. It is the kingdom of love; hence such as are actuated by the passion of hate, could not enter it.

As men hate God and love sin, they turn away from heaven and set their faces toward hell. And when they finally get there, they have simply reached their own country. God does not force people either into heaven or hell. It is impossible that He should do so and not interfere with the freedom of man's volition. As He does not arbitrarily compel men to be saved, so in like manner He does not compel them to be damned. Men must, of their own free will, repent, turn to God, and live; or they must continue in impenitence, turn away from God, and die.

“God is love,” and that love shines equally for all; for He is no respecter of persons, but when men choose darkness rather than light, He will not force them to come to Him, or to abide in the light of his love. Arbitrary force does not change character. The real judgment of each individual is continually going on, and is formed or entered up before he enters the spiritual world. This is what the Lord means when He says that his Word shall judge us at the last day.

“Every man’s mind is the book in which is recorded all the thoughts, words and deeds of his whole life.” These things constitute the quality of his soul, and determine the nature of his future existence. The final decision of his ruling love writes out the sentence of life or death, of salvation or damnation ; hence it is for each of us to make his sentence what he will, for all our actions proceed from the will ; and if we find ourselves in hell at last, it is not the Lord who has sent us there. We are there by our own volition. This is what Christ meant when He said to the Jews : “Ye **WILL** not come to me that ye might have life.” Christ came, “that they might have life [the truly human life], and that they might have it more abundantly ;” but He could not by arbitrary force compel them to receive it. Anything that destroys the freedom of volition, blots out the man, or takes away every essential quality that lifts him above or distinguishes him from the brute creation. In this world, by the use of moral agencies, while the man is in equilibrium between good and evil, truth and falsity, or heaven and hell, the will may be influenced by good against evil, by truth against falsity, so as to enable it to overcome the latter, and so come into harmony with the former, and thus into heaven at last. But when evil is fully and finally confirmed in a man, he cannot be reached by good ; and hence is

eternally in hell. And so when falsity has received its final and full confirmation, man can never again be reached by the truth, and cannot, therefore, be saved; for salvation is in the TRUTH absolutely, and never without it. But no man is sent to hell by any arbitrary decree, or pre-destined, prearranged, foreordained arrangement of the Almighty.

God sends no one to hell. He wills the death of no one. "For as I live," saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his evil way and live." Hence He says, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." (Isa. lv. 7.) "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. xi. 28, 30.)

From first to last, the Gospel voices God's love to men. That love shines like the light of the sun for the whole world of mankind. It never changes into wrath or hate. The inmost essence of God is love. It is immutable and unchangeable. No

angry passions rankle in the Divine bosom. "He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4.) His judgment is always according to the truth. That judgment is, that those who repent of their sins by ceasing to commit them, and who turn to Him with a full purpose of heart, shall live; and that those who will not repent, but purposely continue in their sins, and thus refuse to acknowledge the Lord, shall lose the true life, or die. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James i. 15.) They die because they choose death rather than life. And they go to hell finally, not by the Lord's decree, but by their own election. A confirmed life in sin, and an existence in hell, are inseparably conjoined. It is thought by some that the Lord, in the exercise of his mercy, will finally deliver such and raise them to heaven. But how can He? His mercy does in time all that is possible to be done, while men have the power to co-operate with Him and be saved. But when they are wholly confirmed in evil and falsity, their power of co-operation is gone, and gone forever. Hence there would be no way for the Lord to reach them but by arbitrary force. And suppose He were to force them into heaven, they would plunge quickly into hell, for they could not endure the love, and light, and purity, and truth of the heavenly state.

The judgment of each individual, therefore, takes place when he enters the spiritual world, and every one is then and there examined as to his quality, and afterwards ascends to heaven, or descends to hell, according as he is found to be in the love of evil and falsity, or of truth and good. And the day in which this examination takes place is each individual's judgment day. When man enters heaven it is forever. When he enters hell it is the same. "It is a state and condition of being, formed in the one case by the reception of the truth and a life according to the commandments, and in the other by the rejection of the truth and a life according to falsity. But before entering either heaven or hell, all are for a time in the world of spirits, which is an intermediate state—a state midway between heaven and hell, where this judgment is effected." "Many who are good at heart, but have been wrongly instructed in the world and are filled with errors which they thought to be truth, and who are encompassed with false notions and theories, are, when instructed by the angels, divested of all these things, and receiving the truth gladly, go to heaven." Hence comes the salvation of all men in every nation who fear God and work righteousness, for God says all such are accepted of Him. (Acts x. 35.) "They love righteousness and truth, and worship God according to the light they have.

There are such in every nation on the globe to-day. Vast multitudes who never heard of Christ as He is revealed to us, will be instructed in the spiritual world and be saved. So far as they know God they worship Him; and since Christ is God, they really worship Christ, although they never heard of that name." Many who have been wont to sigh over the poor heathen, if they do not square their own lives by the commandments, will see at last those same heathen going into the Kingdom, and they themselves thrust out. (Matt. xxi. 31; Luke xiii. 28.) Is it reasonable to suppose that God will consign the vast majority of mankind to the eternal damnation of hell without any hearing or examination whatever? Is it consistent with our notions of justice? And if men are to be heard, or if they are to be examined, where shall such hearing or examination take place, if not in the intermediate state? It certainly does not take place fully (though it may partially) in this world, and it cannot be accomplished in heaven or hell. Every man has a right to be heard, even before an earthly tribunal, and the law of no civilized country condemns him without a hearing. How much more, then, before a tribunal of divine and impartial justice?

Millions of the human family are constantly going into the spiritual world who never had an opportunity in this world to learn anything about

God or divine truth as revealed in the Word. The common belief is that all such must be damned. Damned for not knowing what it was impossible for them to learn? and for not believing in a name they never heard of, and to learn of which they never had any opportunity? The idea is preposterous. If the popular theory of the atonement be true, that Christ did really suffer the penalty due to the sins of the whole world, then every lost one of those heathen nations ought in justice to be saved. For where is the justice in damning those poor ignorant heathen when Christ has paid their debt and purchased redemption for them? One thing is certain, no injustice will be inflicted on any one by the Lord.

Now, as to the general judgment, there have been several since the creation of man. They have always occurred in the spiritual world, at the end or consummation of a church on earth. The first general judgment was at the end of the Adamic Church, and it transpired in the spiritual world at the period of Noah's flood, which was the end of that world, or the consummation of the Adamic Church. Falsity and sin in every form had overwhelmed and extinguished every vestige of the original glorious church, when for a long period men lived and walked in open communion with the angels of heaven, and in mutual love and fellowship. Divine love kindled the holy

fire of affection in their wills, and Divine wisdom shed heavenly light into their understandings, and they ate freely of the fruit of the Tree of Life, and drank of the river of God's pleasure that flowed uninterruptedly through the sacred Eden in which they dwelt. This was the morning of the first church on earth. But it had its noon, its evening, and reached its consummation or end amid the darkness and gloom of a terrible night, when it was overwhelmed by the destructive agencies of the flood—a flood of desolating falsity. This was the final judgment of that church. It was the end of the Antediluvian world.

A new church was founded by Noah and his posterity, and the last judgment of that church occurred when it had declined from the righteousness proclaimed by its founder, until it became swallowed up in idolatry, and was dispersed. This church flourished in Asia, and to some extent in Africa. At its termination, another age had ended. Then was formed the church of the Israelites under Moses, by the proclamation of the Decalogue from Mount Sinai. This church was consummated at the time of our Lord's first advent, when the Jews were dispersed among the nations of the earth. This was the last judgment of that church.

In each and every case the consummation was reached amid the impenetrable darkness of spirit-

ual night. In each case the heavens gathered blackness, the stars of heaven fell to the earth, the sun became darkened, and the moon withdrew her light, according to the true spiritual significance of these expressions. All these natural phenomena (or what appear as such according to the letter of Scripture) signify the obscuration of heavenly light, the perversion of good, the adulteration of truth, the confirmation of falsity, and the corruption of worship by idolatry. The last judgment of the present Christian dispensation is described by John in Rev., 20th chapter, and the creation of new heavens and a new earth, which means a new church in the spiritual world and on earth, described in Rev., 21st chapter.

We are now in the evening twilight of the Christian Church, founded by Christ and his apostles, and at the same time in the morning twilight of a New Church signified by the new heavens and the new earth, described by John. Our Lord Jesus Christ is about to make all things new. The shadows will depart, but the substance will remain. The chaff will be burned up, but the wheat will be gathered into God's barn. The tares will be bundled into the fire, but truth and good will be saved. The dark clouds of error will be dispersed, but the bright effulgence of the Sun of righteousness will burst forth in unwonted splendor, even as seven days in one, in the day

when the Lord shall bring again Zion. The sun shall no more be clothed in blackness, nor shall the moon refuse to give her light. No more shall the stars of heaven fall to the earth, or the powers of the heavens be shaken. The tribulation of those days once passed, it is gone forever. The consummation of each successive church has been accomplished in the night, when the vision has been obscured by darkness, so that spiritual truth is no longer seen; when evils of every kind have corrupted good, and falsities have adulterated truth; when the stars of heaven have fallen to the earth (or the knowledges of divine things fallen out of men's minds), and the powers of the heavens have been shaken by the defilement of heavenly affections, and the divorceement of celestial graces. But of the church that is to be, it is said, "there shall be no night there." Those that have been, have ended and passed away; but that which is to come shall not end, but shall stand forever.





VII.

LOVE TO GOD, AND CHARITY TOWARD THE NEIGHBOR, THE PRIME ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHAT are the essentials of the Christian religion? What is its sum and substance? Our Lord has himself answered this question in a manner sufficiently explicit. In one of the Gospels it is written: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. xxii. 37-40.)

Christianity does not consist in external forms and ceremonies, as the saying of prayers, giving alms, attending church services, submitting to ordinances, subscribing creeds, and talking piously. These are no part of it, though they may all be incidentally connected with it. But when we imagine that we are Christians because we do these things, we practice upon ourselves a fatal deception. We may be closely observant of every external form of an avowed religious belief, and

never know the first principle of Christianity, or possess one iota of the Spirit.

And right here is where multitudes deceive themselves oftener and more successfully than they do their fellow-men. Piety that consists merely in the punctilious observance of certain external rites, has often been weighed in the balances of just and righteous dealing, and as often has been found wanting. And if it is found wanting in the exteriors of life, it certainly has no existence in the interiors of the man. Because, from a variety of motives, one may be above suspicion as to his Christian exteriors, and yet be utterly wanting as to the quality of his interiors—and the interiors constitute the real man. People are not always what they seem ; that is, the externals observed of men are not always in correspondence with the internal thoughts and purpose.

Hence every person has an outward and an inward existence, an exterior and an interior. But it is the interior that decides the quality, and is the source whence all externals take their rise. An impure motive lying deeply hidden within the internals of the man or woman, may, and often does, assume the externals of purity and seeming good intent ; and so the outwardly good actions appear very different when the evil motive is known from which they sprang. This is never oftener seen than in the verbal professions of piety.

By such professions the most unworthy often ingratiate themselves into the confidence of good people, who, being pure in heart themselves, are slow to suspect a wrong intent in others. The result is, that there is a large element in all the churches who use religious profession as a means for the accomplishment of unworthy ends. Self-interest, either in a social, business, or professional line, lies concealed underneath it all. Hence it is a hollow mockery and a sham. However fair the exterior, the interior is full of all uncleanness and iniquity. Ever and anon the mask is laid aside, or torn off by circumstances, and the real man stands revealed in some immorality, crime, or fraudulent transaction, to the grief of the church, the scandal of religion, and the scorn and derision of all honest people.

The low and sensuous standard of Biblical interpretation has fostered this state of things. The Word in its literal sense relates to externals only; and doctrines derived thence, seldom go deeper than the outward forms of piety. The Jewish nation was never more absolutely perfect in its observance of all the outward forms of religion than at our Lord's advent, when it was wanting in all the essentials of interior righteousness. It was completely devastated and its end had come. It was for this reason that the preaching of Christ was such a terrible rebuke to the prevalent relig-

ious notions and theories of his day. He opened up the interiors of the Scribes and Pharisees, and they stood revealed, the religious monsters of the age. His preaching searched the heart and probed the most secret motive. He paid no deference to the assumed soundness of the creed then in vogue, nor inquired how many and how long prayers the people were accustomed to make. He showed the utter worthlessness of mere external religion. Jewish customs were of no avail, nor the traditions of the elders any authority. Obedience to the commandments of men was impious mockery, in that it rendered null and void the Word of God. Long prayers were offered in impious pretence, while underneath a pious exterior the most diabolical practices were indulged—acts of shameful extortion and excess. Dishonesty in business prevailed to such an extent, that even the widows and orphans were robbed by pious dignitaries of the Synagogue. There was no truth within. An empty formalism prevailed. At heart God was neither loved nor worshiped; nor was the neighbor regarded. Both God and man are left out of the account in the mere externals of religion. Self alone is concerned. Self-love reigns supreme. It swells to enormous proportions. It is the centre toward which everything gravitates. It is the altar on which all things are sacrificed. The boast of religious zeal, of concern for the purity of the creed,

and the aggrandizement of the sect, is vainglorious and empty. It is the boast of a partisan, the glory of a sensualist, and the cloak of a hypocrite. There is no Christianity in it.

The prime factors of the Christian religion must of necessity be interior. Love cannot exist in the externals. It may manifest itself through them, but its existence is in the interiors. Nor can love to God and charity toward the neighbor be separated. The one cannot exist without the other. It is a Divine marriage that knows no such thing as divorce. When we truly worship God as required by the first commandment of the Decalogue, we at the same time fulfill the new commandment given by our Lord, that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. The all of religion is contained in these two requirements. You can neither add to them nor subtract from them; nor can they be multiplied or divided, except by themselves. They are the fulfillment of all the Law and the Prophets.

Love is the fulfilling of the Law, and charity toward the neighbor is the realization of that fulfillment in human experience. When good reigns in the interiors, to *do* good is the normal condition and life of the exteriors. A righteous life is evolved from the inner qualities of a righteous soul. Pure, unselfish, and practical love to mankind is evolved from unfeigned love to God. The

translucent glory of a pure life lived for the good of others, springs from the fountain of a pure heart. God dwells in the affections, and the neighbor is a welcome guest in every such dwelling-place.

When the good Samaritan cared for the man who fell among thieves, he worshiped God by every act of compassion toward his fellow. The Priest and the Levite, though on their way to the Temple to pray, did not worship God at all, because there was no love in their hearts toward the neighbor. With them piety consisted in devotion to the temple service, and in adhesion to their forms and ceremonies. While in *fact* there was no piety at all in those things. Doing good to others from a principle of love and compassion, is piety (if there be an inward acknowledgment of the Lord). It is religion. It is religious worship. It is God-like, —infinitely above all forms and ceremonial observances, all sacrifices and oblations, all creeds and dogmas, all ecclesiasticisms and church orders. It is the divine form of beneficent procedure, and the divine life incarnated in the hearts of men. Cold and frigid souls are melted under its influence, like ice beneath the warm sun of a summer's day. All animosities and all alienations vanish at its touch. All evil thoughts, deeds, and imaginings flee at the approach of this divine love, as did evil spirits from the presence of Christ. Dead forms

are invested with new life. Proud self-will falls like Dagon before the ark of God. The sensuous principle ceases to dominate. The carnal nature is crucified. The interiors are cleansed. The externals are reformed. The whole man becomes a new creature.

As the divine love imbues the will, so the divine light illuminates the understanding. As truth takes root in the heart, its fruits are realized in the life. It is a living principle, a divine force, a potent agency, an unconquerable energy, and a divinely ordained instrumentality for good. It renders to all their just dues; honor to whom honor is due, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom. It renders unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. It takes nothing which it does not give in return. Freely it receives, freely it gives. It hoards nothing through mere self-interest. Nor does it give ostentatiously for pomp or show, or to spread a sounding name abroad. It is merciful because it delighteth in mercy; kind because it delighteth in kindness; loving because it delighteth in love; pure, meek, humble, obedient, honest, truthful, chaste, sober, upright, righteous, and neighborly, because the delight is in these things.

These are not arbitrary rules, no enforced regulations, no ecclesiastical tyranny, no oppression of soul and no bondage to religious intolerance, where

love to God and the neighbor holds sway. Every yoke is broken. "For whom the Son makes free, he shall be free indeed." Without this love all gifts are valueless, and all graces of no avail. It is the infinite essence of the Divine nature, and it is the essential element of Christianity. There can be no such thing as Christianity without it. There may be the heated passion of the enthusiast, the blind zeal of the sectarian, the bigotry of the formalist, the devotion of the partisan, and the intolerance of the despot, without love to God or regard for man; but the Christ spirit is in none of these things. Nor is this love a mere sentiment or emotion. It is infinitely more. It is both light and heat. It warms our hearts, and at the same time lights our pathway. It is the revelation of God in our conscious experience, and the restoration of the prodigal to his Father's house. It inspires joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away. It disperses the gloom of the spirit, and scatters the gathering clouds that hang lowering over the end of human life. It reveals the spiritual world, and assures us of the eternal realities of the future. It inspires obedience to God and devotion to the weal of man. It leads us to do good, and not evil, all the days of our lives. It forbids the oppression of the hireling in his wages, or the taking up of a reproach against one's neighbor. It leads to nothing silly or vain,

but to everything that is wise, and good, and useful. It has regard in all things to uses. Whatever is of use to man is of praise to God. That which is of no use, is dishonoring to God and deleterious to men. Things of use cannot be harmful, unless perverted and abused. Really, there is no evil except perverted good. There is no falsity except adulterated truth. Faith is good, but divorced from charity it becomes an element of evil. The wreck and ruin of Christendom are traceable to this cause. If charity had been the dominant principle, religious wars and persecutions would have been unknown. When the dogma of salvation by faith alone was pushed to the front, charity, sweet charity forsook the hearts of men. Religious zealots and fanatical reformers became incarnate devils; and instead of loving the neighbor as themselves, they tortured him with every conceivable instrument of cruelty. Blood flowed in rivers, and the ashes of burned victims were scattered to the winds of heaven. Freedom was swept from the earth, liberty was unknown, and hope died out of human hearts. Hell broke loose, and during 1260 years the ten persecutions raged with unabated fury.

The dogma of three persons in the Godhead and salvation by faith alone, was the shibboleth of Protestant religion, developed after the 1260 years of Rome's supreme power had ended, but

with a spirit in many respects scarcely less satanic than that of Papal Rome itself. There was the same separation of faith from charity. Salvation was by faith alone, and there was not charity enough in exercise to tolerate any difference of opinion in religious matters. If charity had been the dominant principle, Protestantism would have been a unit to-day, because love to God and man would have tolerated differences of opinion in minor matters. But in its absence the Protestants became divided and subdivided into many discordant factions, leaving entirely out of account the main issues, and exalting to supreme importance trivial points of disagreement. It was neither love to God nor charity toward the neighbor that divided the Christian world, and set its people in antagonism one against another. The unity of the faith originated in the doctrine of the absolute unity of God, and the resultant oneness of his people. The destruction of the unity of God destroyed also the unity of the faith and scattered the flock of Christ. A subversion of the divine order bred disorder throughout Christendom. Human "standards" were reared in direct opposition to the Divine Standard. The Word of God was made null and void by the traditions of men. As divisions multiplied, bitterness of feeling was engendered, and, between the two thieves of religious intolerance and sectarian bigotry, the Christ

of charity was crucified, and is still crucified daily among us. It is a daily sacrifice. Often men are led to exclaim,

“ O! the rarity
Of Christian Charity
Under the sun.”

And seldom do we hear the exclamation, except in derision, “ Behold, how these brethren love one another ! ”

In the light of these considerations, we see how little of pure and unadulterated Christianity there is now in operation. For our love to one another is the exact measure of our love to the Lord. “ If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen ? ” And if we love one another as He has given us commandment, then God dwells in us, and we in Him ; for “ God is love.” Thus our service becomes one of pleasure and delight, and not of fear, “ because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. But perfect love casteth out fear.”

Love to God leads us to keep the commandments, and charity toward the neighbor enables us to hear one another’s burdens. “ Love worketh no ill to the neighbor ; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.” “ He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me.” “ If a man love me, he will keep my words.” “ This is the

love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."

Love is, therefore, the parent of all graces, the root of all excellence, the fountain of all knowledge, the standard of all judgment, the test of Divine fellowship, the essence of all obedience, the substance of all truth, the realization of all blessings, the source of all life, the abiding spring of all comfort, the end of Providence, the ineffable brightness of the Divine glory, the fullness of all revelation, the effective element of redemption, the harbinger of all good, the citadel of all power, the essential of all righteousness, the incarnation of God in humanity, and the bond of perfectness. It is the greater which comprehends the less of all there is in religion.

God himself is love, and all things that are have been evolved from the unmeasurable infinity of his divine essence—love. That love is revealed in every sentence of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. It smiles in the sunlight, sparkles in the twinkling stars of night, drops in the gentle rain from heaven, blooms in the matchless beauty of ten thousand flowers, gushes from nature's perennial springs, blushes in the opening morn, and brings gladness to the heart of man in the abundant harvests of earth. When night around us her sable mantle spreads, love— infinite, almighty love—a constant vigil keeps, while nature's sweet

restorer, balmy sleep, gives rest and repose to these weary bodies and care-burdened minds.

Thus, by day and by night, from the heavens above and the earth beneath, from gospel and from law, all things proclaim the Lord Jehovah, God of love. And all things invite man to neighborly fellowship with man. They bid the nations sheath the sword and learn to war no more. They command the oppressor to oppress no more, and the spoiler to cease from spoiling. They proclaim a jubilee to the burdened millions of earth, bidding them cease to do evil, and learn to do well, by doing unto others all things they would that others should do unto them. Thus love becomes "the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Man is brought into reciprocal union and fellowship with the neighbor, and everywhere delights in the abundance of peace and prosperity. There is the closest union even amid the greatest diversity.

Under such a *régime* there can be no persecution for opinion's sake. There may be the utmost fidelity to one's own convictions, and yet unrestrained toleration toward others of a different mind. All nature is diverse, and yet in harmony; thus God teaches us the lesson of unity with diversity, of harmony amid the greatest possible variety and unlikeness in the natural world. There are no two plants, trees, shrubs, flowers, grains, or

grasses alike. Throughout the universal realm of nature no two things are exactly alike. There are no two human beings alike. They differ in form and feature, in body and in mind. They differ in mental compass, in intellectual acumen, in education and surroundings. They are small and great, narrow and broad, shallow and profound, enlightened and ignorant; and yet it is possible for all to dwell together in unity. But it must be in the Divine order. The acorn sustains a relation to the oak, the germ to the plant, the rill to the brook, the brook to the river, and the river to the sea. But any one can see that it is impossible to put the oak into the acorn, the plant into the germ, the brook into the rill, the river into the brook, or the sea into the river. So you cannot put the great within the small, the broad within the narrow, the profound within the shallow, nor intelligence within unenlightenment. The attempt to do this disrupts the union, breaks the harmony, and inverts the divine order of the universe. All strifes and divisions, all animosities and bickerings, all religious wars and persecutions, are the result of this inversion. Carried out to its logical sequence, this inversion would disrupt the harmony of heaven itself, and produce therein the discord and confusion of hell.

Obedience to the axiomatic principle of love to God and charity toward the neighbor as the

essential thing and the fundamental love of life, is all that constitutes heaven. And when this principle is acknowledged and acted upon among the men of the church on earth, then will his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven ; and the whole world will be filled with a knowledge of his glory, as the waters cover the sea ; and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God.

Such is to be the realized condition of things on this globe. The creation of the new heavens and the new earth, will be its accomplished fulfillment. It is according to the Divine promise, and is embodied in God's infinite purposes of grace. It will be brought about in ways we know not of. A new dispensation will succeed that which has dominated the religious world for nearly two thousand years. Its early dawn even now appears. The glorious sun of divine love and charity is rising, never more to go down leaving the children of men in darkness. Love to God and charity toward the neighbor will abound more and more. The old spirit of religious intolerance will be cast out. Old worn-out systems of theology will gradually disappear. The creeds of men will be subject to repeated revisions, and finally be obliterated forever from Christian literature. The spiritual and celestial sense of the Sacred Scriptures will become more and more manifest. Man-

kind will be brought closer together, as they are lifted from the low marshes of sensuality and moral night, into the light of greater intelligence and higher spiritual discernment. The general diffusion of knowledge blended with neighborly love, will break the oppressor's yoke and hurl despots from their thrones. The spreading abroad of religious liberty and the increase of spiritual knowledge, will annihilate the throne of ecclesiastical tyranny, and emancipate the mass of Christians from sectarian bondage. Already the walls of separation are tottering to their fall. Amid the ruins of the old system will the new one rise, magnificently grand, as the Holy City of God, "the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."





VIII.

WHAT IS “EVANGELICAL RELIGION”?

MUCH is said concerning evangelical religion and an orthodox faith. Any type of religion that has the evangelical label is regarded as sound beyond question, and as one that will pass current, not only in this world but in that which is to come. Of course, there can be no admixture of error in that which is declared “evangelical,” even as it is impossible that there should be any *truth* in any system of religion not couched in evangelical *forms* of expression. It is assumed that everything outside of the so-called evangelical system is erroneous, schismatic, and heretical, destructive to man and dishonoring to God. But assumptions prove nothing. Words and forms of expression are often employed that convey no meaning. Truth may be rejected as error, while falsity is confirmed as truth.

We have fallen upon times when the doctrines and commandments of men are received as the “Living Oracles,” and when human tradition renders the Word of God of none effect; when policy is more potent than principle, and the honor that cometh from men is sought rather than the honor that cometh from God; when systems are

estimated according to set forms of speech, and human character by the outward expression of the lips. Hence all that is necessary to know of a church, is the soundness of its creed. If the creed is regarded as correct, the church is termed evangelical, and no further questions are asked. Churches by a vote adopt an orthodox creed, and are therefore considered orthodox. They subscribe to doctrines called "evangelical," and hence become evangelical churches. By a similar kind of reasoning men profess honesty, and are therefore to be accounted honest. Licentious people may avow chastity, and therefore are to be considered chaste. Corruption may assume the garb of purity, and thus be declared pure.

But any one of ordinary intelligence can see the fallacy of such reasoning. Men may assume to be honest and pure and chaste, but that does not make them so. It is the *reality* and not the profession that is needed. Declaring by a vote that a certain system of doctrines is "evangelical," does not constitute it such. The vote is merely the expressed opinion of those who have adopted the system. In fact, the doctrines *may* not be true. Truth is one thing, and the understanding of it is another. Then it makes a wonderful difference whether we receive it in the intellect only, or possess it in the heart; whether it enters into the understanding simply, or into

the will or affections as well. Before we can rightfully claim to be evangelical, truth must come into the understanding and thence into the will, in the supremacy of its regenerating power. The acceptance or adoption of a system of doctrine, does not necessarily effect any change in the internal state or quality of the heart.

Hence it often happens that men who subscribe to the strictest evangelical doctrines, are both ignorant and self-willed. The doctrines do not of necessity make them such ; but resting in the mere external profession of them does. This obviates the need of a personal search for truth, and in fact precludes thorough investigation. Men are taught from childhood that a certain system of belief is evangelical. The parent inherits the idea and transmits it to his children ; and so on from generation to generation. They are taught at the same time that everything outside of that so-called evangelical creed, is non-evangelical and false.

To such an extent does this belief or impression prevail, that there are thousands of ministers who have never dared to make an independent examination of religious truth for themselves. They simply believe and teach the system in which they have been educated. I am not blaming the *ministers*, but the cast-iron *systems* that hamper them. To cut loose from the bondage of tradition and

creed, and proclaim their freedom and right of private judgment and of personal investigation of truth, is to subject themselves to social ostracism, and often to the anathemas of their brethren. Their motives are impugned, which is the worst possible form of persecution; and everything is done to destroy the public confidence in them as men of honor and veracity.

Under such circumstances it is not to be wondered at that preachers often smother their honest convictions, and cherish them as private property rather than, by giving them public expression, to subject themselves to the "evangelical" (?) forms of persecution that are sure to follow. Thus a temptation is placed before them to maintain a guilty silence, and dishonesty is awarded a premium. To be frank and honest is to suffer ostracism; to be dishonest is to gain favor, influence, fellowship, honor, and a good support. Yet it is all "evangelical." It does not matter what you believe, or what you do not believe, so long as you keep it to yourself. You may not, deep down in your heart, credit a single dogma of the creed; but so long as you say you do, and preach within its prescribed limits, you are all right because you are "evangelical." You obey the powers that be, and conform to established usage. But even though God himself reveal to you a knowledge of truth beyond the boundary line of your particular

system, and bid you proclaim it to the world, you must not obey Him, for it would not be “evangelical” to do so.

I know the Lord has given me the views of truth which of late I have proclaimed to the world, and that He bade me give utterance to them; and for doing as I have done, in conscientious obedience to God, I am declared non-evangelical; and this church is cut off from denominational fellowship, for allowing its pastor to follow his convictions of duty in honestly preaching the truth as he understands it. Sympathy was expressed in words for this *church* not long ago, but it was repeatedly declared that not one particle of sympathy was had for its pastor. No sympathy, no love, no fellowship, no effort to point out my errors by answering my arguments, and no effort to show from the Word the fallacy of my reasoning; but in place of these, bitter denunciation, cruel imputations, and personal ill-treatment;—condemned without being allowed a hearing or even a word explaining my position. Yet all this was “evangelical”! It was after the most approved pattern of orthodox treatment of those who differ in opinion from the formulated standards of religious belief.

But because a system of doctrine is labeled “evangelical,” we are not therefore to conclude that it is really such, until it has been tested and

proved. The Word of the Lord judges every man; and before the same court of final appeal, must all systems of religious doctrine be brought at last. The test will be searching, the judgment just, and the decision final. Men are judged according to their works, trees by their fruits, and religious beliefs by their effects upon life and character. This is what Christ meant when He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

As every tree produces fruit according to its kind, so every system produces effects according to its own nature. If the fruit is corrupt, the tree that produced it is corrupt also. It is impossible for a good tree to produce evil fruit. The good tree of the Scriptures is the religion of Jesus Christ. If there is any discrepancy between it and evangelical religion (so-called), so much the worse for the religion. The religion of Christ may be summed up in one word, "LOVE." It is all contained in that word. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 16.) "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." (v. 7, 8.) Hence it is said again: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law." (Rom. xiii. 10.) "If ye love

me, keep my commandments." (John xiv. 15.) "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." (xv. 12.) "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 35.) "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39.)

Thus we see that the religion of Christ in its essence, spirit, influence, and effects—in its internal operations and its external manifestations—is love to God and love to man. It renders to God that which is God's own, also to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and to every man that which is his rightful due. It inflicts no injury; works no ill; does no harm; burdens no oppressed spirit; blinds no eyes; stops no ears; hardens no heart; breathes no spite, or hatred, or wrath, or malice, or revenge; forges no fetters; establishes no dogmas; sanctions no unjust judgment of another; gives no license to do evil, to inflict pain, or to persecute. It heals the wounded spirit, helps the struggling soul, floods the understanding with light and the heart with love.

The religion of Christ is broad and philanthropic.

It is deep and comprehensive. It is minute, yet vast and infinite. It is human, yet Divine; particular, yet general; concentrated, yet diffused. It is concentrated in the heart and diffused through the life. It reforms the life or outward conduct, and regenerates the soul. It gives to every man light and life as he is prepared to receive it. It fills alike the smallest and the greatest measure of capacity. It makes no set of men its exclusive custodians, and delegates to no church the power or right to dictate the plan or extent of its operations. It can no more be put into a creed than the ocean can be bottled up and set upon the shelves of an apothecary shop. It can no more be contained in dogmatic statements than the air surrounding our globe can be contained in a Chinese bomb.

The religion of Christ is love and light. It is righteousness of life, and not a mere bundle of abstractions. It transforms character, enlightens the understanding, renews the will, purifies the heart, and permeates the whole man. It does not consist in subscribing creeds, but in a life according to the commandments. It is manifested, not in words but in deeds, and consists not in professions but in possessions. In spirit, it is the golden rule. It leads us to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. As we would not inflict an injury upon ourselves, so it makes it impossible

for us to inflict an injury upon others. Christ taught his religion as recorded in the Gospels, and exemplified it in his life. His disciples drank of his spirit, and copied his example; and others took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Christ was their Teacher, and thus they were taught of God.

In short, the religion of Jesus Christ reveals God, shows us his personal unity, tells us plainly of the Father, unveils eternity, brings life and immortality to light, secures the at-one-ment, effects the reconciliation and the resurrection from the dead, reveals the spiritual world, the nature of the last judgment and of heaven and hell, that men might not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

Thus have I briefly sketched the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the religion we preach, the religion that purifies, exalts, ennobles, saves. Yet it has, as you all know, been declared heresy, and hence not "evangelical." In view of which, I trust it will not be deemed uncharitable if I declare that the *so-called* evangelical religion is *not* the religion of Christ, and therefore is not *truly* evangelical. Shall I tell you why? I will—though the task is not one in which I take any delight, and though I may, by so doing, wound the feelings of some estimable people, and incur the liability of having my motives impugned and my

purpose misconstrued. But the time, I think, has arrived for plain speaking on this as on all other subjects. My reasons, then, briefly stated, are the following:—

The so-called evangelical religion destroys the unity of God, robs Christ of his supreme Divinity, presents an erroneous view of the atonement and the resurrection, of the spiritual world and the life of man after death. It ignores the second coming of the Lord, or misunderstands and misinterprets the prophecies which foretell it. It is sectarian, so much so that the church which is the Lord's body, is rent asunder, member from member—thus destroying the visible unity of the body. It is founded on diverse and conflicting creeds and commandments of men. It is proscriptive and oppressive in its spirit and methods. It is in opposition to the Saviour's prayer for the unity of his people. It is without Divine sanction or warrant. It has been, and is, productive of unholy divisions and strifes among those who should be of one mind and one heart. Its history is dark with deeds of persecution and blood. It has inspired in not a few the disposition to "Lord it over God's heritage." Hence the "Clerical Orders" from the Pope down to the humblest preacher that rides an appointed circuit. Its symbols are a mixture of truth and error. Great truths are falsified and corrupted, and fundamental errors are

confirmed as truth. It is largely a religion of worldly policy, external grandeur, and sectarian rivalry. Denominational affairs are often manipulated by rings as unscrupulous as ever disgraced the political arena. Churches are often made seemingly to prosper by dishonest and underhanded means, of which an ordinary sinner would be ashamed. "Cunning craftiness," smooth-tongued flattery, lying and deception, are sometimes employed on the principle that the "end justifies the means." The commandments of Christ are ignored, and the "Golden Rule" trampled under foot. The Sacred Scriptures are rendered null and void by the creed being made the supreme test of character and Christian fellowship. The sweetest charity and the purest heart that throbs in a human breast, find but a cold welcome, if any, within the "evangelical" fold, if the dogmas of the creed are dissented from. Though you bind the Word of God upon your bosom, and cherish its sacred precepts in your heart, and obey its commandments in your life, and fail in your adherence to creed, you are turned away. There is no room for such as you within the "evangelical" fold. It is a sort of religious or ecclesiastical corral, and the Word of the Lord is not a passport of sufficient authority to pass you across the lines.

Intelligent people have long observed this state of things, and the effect has been to develop skep-

ticism and unbelief to such an extent that the masses in Christian lands are as far removed from the influence of the Gospel as though they dwelt upon the planet Mars. In rejecting the unreasonable and unscriptural interpretations of the "evangelical" school of Christians, they have discarded Christianity itself. It is not strange they should confound the two, since from their earliest recollections evangelical religion has been proclaimed as the religion of Jesus Christ. But there is a wide difference between them, and every year the breach grows wider or more palpable.

In drawing this indictment against the so-called "evangelical religion" of our time, I would not be understood as holding or teaching that no truth is preached, or that there are no good people in the "evangelical churches." A great deal of truth is proclaimed there, and millions of good Christian people, I doubt not, are to be found there. But I refer to the systems themselves, to the sectarian organizations, their empty boast of superior piety, the controlling forces that operate them, and the principles according to which they are generally manipulated.

There is nothing about "evangelical religion" in the Bible. It is a theological term, and churches are only human organizations. Just in so far as they are controlled by the Word and Spirit of Christ they are Christian churches, and no further.

Now, since your Pastor has been declared a heretic by the Central Baptist Association of California, and you have been refused admission into that body because of your adherence to him and his teachings, it seems proper and right, before I conclude, that I should give a brief summary of my faith, in order that you may know precisely what the alleged heresy is. I will say, then—

I believe in the Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. I believe that Jesus Christ is God, and the only God of heaven and earth; that the whole of the Divine Trinity (which is a Trinity not of *persons* but of *essential divine elements* in one person) is in Him; that He is the manifested Jehovah, and the only proper object, therefore, of religious worship. I believe in the Divine Incarnation, and in the atonement of Christ, but not in its *vicarious* nature. I believe in the resurrection and ascension of Christ as our Mediator. I believe in the resurrection of man, not in a material, but in a spiritual and substantial body. I believe in the second coming of the Lord “in the clouds of heaven,” which clouds I understand to mean the letter of the Word, which veils, and to some eyes obscures, its inner glories. I believe in a judgment to come, when every man will be judged according to his works. I believe in a heaven and a hell (not outward and material, but as inward and

spiritual states of life), in one or the other of which every human being will dwell forever. I believe in the divine inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures—an inspiration far higher and deeper, too, than that attributed to them in the theologies of "evangelical religion." I believe a Christian life consists in living according to the commandments of God. I believe in the necessity of regeneration, and that no man can enter into the Kingdom of God except he be born again—born from above.

Now, if the above declaration of belief is heretical, I must plead guilty to the charge of heresy. If to reject the dogmas, commandments, and creeds of men is heresy, then I am a heretic; and as such I propose to live and die. If, for cherishing such a faith as this, I am persecuted, and my name is cast out as evil, I count it an honor so to suffer. It ministers to my happiness. It draws me closer to the blessed Saviour, and makes me more conscious of the Divine approval.

For the past four years I have lived blamelessly among you, and have endeavored to do my duty publicly and privately, without fear or favor. Tonight, I stand in conscious freedom, and in the dignity of manly independence. No ecclesiastical bonds fetter my soul or chafe my spirit with their rusty links. No evangelical gatekeeper exacts toll of my conscience. The toll-gates where the

rights of conscience are invaded, and the spirit is bled, and manhood robbed of its dignity and strength, are all on the roads beneath where hirelings and servile minions journey. The highways above are free. The air is pure. The sky is bright. The flowers are fragrant. The fruits abundant. The view is grand. The scenery magnificent. The experience of all who journey thither, delightful. There are no “evangelical” fogs up there. The mists of error are lifted. The clouds of falsity have rolled away. There are no bundles of dead abstractions and débris of decayed systems obstructing the way. They are all down below, in the museums of antiquity. No one ever gets up very high on the mount of God with a lumbering human creed upon his shoulders or across his path. Such things have no place in the King’s highway. They are cast out as hindrances and obstructions. They are as little thought of above, as a gardener thinks of a bundle of dead weeds which he casts into the fire. Our Lord Jesus Christ reigns without a rival there. His Word is Law. His scepter, Power. His nature, Love. His revelation, Truth. And his seven-sealed book of Holy Truth is opened to such as have eyes to see, and they behold Him coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. They tread the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, drink at the crystal stream “which proceedeth out of the throne of

God," eat at will of the fruit of the "Tree of Life," and look out without alarm upon the warring elements beneath. No rage of enemies can reach them there. No shafts of envy or malice can penetrate the solid jasper walls that encircle them. The study and the practice of the highest truth is their delightful employment. Eternal progress in all excellence and in all knowledge, their earnest desire and fulfilled hope. To approximate toward infinite perfection itself, their sublime mission. So they go on and on through the unending cycles of an everlasting existence, exploring the boundless empire of truth and love, and beholding therein more and more of the goodness and glory and mercy of the Lord, to Whom belongs ceaseless and everlasting praise. Amen.





IX.

KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS.

THE commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ are the only law of Christian living, and obeying them is the only way by which we can honor God, benefit the world of mankind, or enter ourselves into the life eternal. The fatal heresy is widespread, and the teachers of it are legion, that we can be saved by faith alone. It is taught that we are not required to keep the commandments, since Jesus Christ has kept them for us, or in our stead. Indeed, it is often urged that it is impossible for us to keep them, and that therefore we are regarded as “not under the law, but under grace.”

But the law alluded to by the Apostle in this connection was not the Decalogue or the Commandments of Christ, but the ceremonial law—the typical observances under the Levitical priesthood, which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on the people. They were “shadows of heavenly things,” mere signs or symbols of good things to come, which made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope by which we draw nigh

unto God, did. When Christ came, the mission of the ceremonial law of Moses was at an end. "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the kingdom of God is preached, and every man may enter into it."

The prophets prophesied till John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of Christ; and up to that time the ceremonial law was in force. Then Christ became the end of that law for righteousness, to every one that accepted Him as the Messiah, to whom the law pointed. Hence Jesus says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." He came as the substance of all the ceremonial shadows; as the antitype of all the Mosaic types, and as the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning his advent. He obeyed the Decalogue, but never did He abrogate or set it aside. Not once, in all his teaching, did He even intimate that men were not under it, or that by his coming it had lost any of its force, or that we could be saved without obedience to it. Instead of this, He epitomized the moral law under two heads, viz. : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thyself." He declared that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." And in harmony with this utterance was his reply to

the young man who propounded an unusual inquiry for those times, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" It was no temporal blessing he craved. It was no bodily healing he desired. He would know what was necessary to be done to secure eternal life. Jesus answered, "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." Now, many teach that our Lord gave a misleading, equivocal answer to the young man's question! But if I believed such a thing possible of Jesus Christ, I could not even regard Him as a good man, much less worship Him as God.

Christ overcame the enemies of man in his own assumed humanity, by obedience to his Father's commandments; and He is our example, and we should follow in his footsteps. Would you overcome idolatry in your heart, and cast out its spirit, keep the first commandment, and worship the Lord thy God, and serve Him only. Would you gain the mastery over the habit and sin of profanity, keep the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

And so on to the end of the Decalogue. Between the first and tenth commandments is comprised every evil to be put away, and every good to be done, in the whole compass of human life, not only in time, but for eternity as well. It is the immutable, unalterable, and eternal law of

Jehovah God, our Lord Jesus Christ, operating uniformly in all worlds for the government of his intelligent creatures.

And as the Lord Jesus Christ who, clothed in our humanity, has kept that law, we may also keep it by strength received from Him, and may walk in the shining way of obedience, "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us."

But leaving this part of our subject, let us come to the consideration of our Lord's doctrine concerning obedience to his commandments. And bear in mind that every sentence I quote in this connection was inspired by Him.

"Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall *do* and *teach* them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

"Every tree that *bringeth not forth good fruit*, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their *fruits* ye shall know them."

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of my Father who is in heaven."

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess

unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me ye that *work iniquity.*"

" Every one that heareth my words and *doeth* them, I will liken him unto a wise man that built his house upon a rock. But every one that hear-*eth* and *doeth them not*, shall be likened unto a foolish man that built his house upon the sand."

" For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, and then shall He reward every man *according to his works.*"

" He said to the Jews: The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation *bringing forth the fruits thereof.*"

" When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, then shall He sit upon the throne of his glory. . . . And He shall say to the sheep on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the king-*dom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world ; for I was hungry, *and ye gave me meat*; I was thirsty, *and ye gave me drink*; I was a stranger, *and ye took me in*; I was naked, *and ye clothed me*; I was sick, *and ye visited me*; I was in prison, *and ye came unto me.* . . . Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

" *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.* For now, also, the axe is laid at the root of the trees ; every tree, therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

" Jesus said, Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and *do not the things which I say?*"

" Every one that cometh to me, and heareth my sayings and *doeth them*, is like unto a man who

built a house and laid the foundation upon a rock. But he that heareth and *doeth not*, is like a man who without a foundation built his house upon the earth."

"Jesus said: My mother and my brethren are these that hear the Word of God and *do it*."

"Depart from me, all ye *workers of iniquity*."

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, *because their deeds are evil*."

"Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest *his deeds* should be reproved. But he that *doeth truth* cometh to the light, that *his deeds* may be made manifest, that they are *wrought in God*."

"And they that have *done good*, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life."

"If any man worship God, and *do his will*, him He heareth."

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

"He that hath my commandments and *doeth them*, he it is that loveth me, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . . And I will come to him and make my abode with him. He that loveth me not, *keepeth not my sayings*."

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman; every branch in me that *beareth not fruit*, He taketh away; but every branch that *bear-eth fruit*, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."

"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. . . . I have chosen you, that ye should

bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

“*If ye love me, keep my commandments.”*

“*He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”*

“*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”*

“*This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you.”*

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience; I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love. *Repent and do the first works*, or else I will remove thy candlestick out of his place.”

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, *I know thy works.*”

“To the angel of the church in Pergamos write, *I know thy works. Repent.*”

“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write, *I know thy works, and charity, and service*, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.”

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write, *I know thy works*, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. I have not found *thy works* perfect before God. *Repent.*”

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, *I know thy works.*”

“To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, *I know thy works. Repent.*”

“I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, *and their works do follow them.*”

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened, and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, *according to their works.*”

“And they were judged *every man according to their works.*”

“Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be.*”

“Blessed are they that *do his commandments,* that they may have right to the tree of life.”

Now all these are the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are the directions He gives for leading a righteous life. How voluminous, how imperative, how unequivocal, how simple, how easy to be understood, how absolutely essential, either to a good life on earth or to an entrance at last into the kingdom of heaven! All his instructions concerning the acquirement of spiritual blessings, both for this life and for that which is to come, are, without an exception, predicated upon the faithful *doing* of his commandments. Every one of the seven churches of Asia were judged, not according to their faith, or their professions, or their theories, or emotions, or sentiments; but *according to their works.*

Every one in the day of final adjudication, (Rev. xx.) is to be judged *according to his works* as found written in the books (the interiors of the

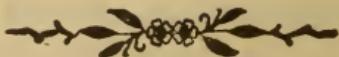
soul) when opened. And almost the last thing recorded in the book of Revelation, is a blessing pronounced upon those "that *do his commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." And in his commission to his Apostles, just before his ascension, our Lord said: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*"

We conclude, therefore, that implicit obedience to the Lord's commandments is absolutely essential to salvation, and that our obedience must be, not from ourselves, but as from the Lord, for it is He that worketh in us both to will and to do his good pleasure. There is no merit, therefore, in our obedience, no goodness in our works, if done from self or in our own name; for we have no power of our own either to be good or to do good. "Power belongeth unto God." Jesus Christ has all power in heaven and in earth. He has gone before us in all the way we are to go, in our human nature, overcoming all the evils within it; and He gives us the needed strength to do his will, to overcome by keeping his commandments, even as He overcame by keeping the same eternal laws.

You will observe that we are saved, not *for* keeping the commandments, but *in* keeping them.

They are the path we tread in our journey back to our Father's house, from which by transgression we have wandered. They are opened to our understandings as the "path of life," and the "way of salvation." Therefore, "if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." They are "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." The Divine fullness flows into poor impoverished humanity, through this God-ordained channel.

We are thus made free from the law of sin and death. Our carnal, sinful nature is thus subdued, overcome, and forever put away. Our self-intelligence thus gives place to Divine wisdom; our self-love to heavenly affections; our ignorance to enlightenment; our errors to divine truth; and our bondage to sin, to the freedom of the sons of God.





ADDENDUM.

HE Editor of this volume takes the liberty of adding the following, which seems not only pertinent, but is in such complete agreement with some things which the author has said of the "evangelical churches" of our times (see pp. 153-166), and withal is so confirmatory of the truth of his statements, that it ought not to be omitted.

Rev. John W. White, of Milroy, Pa., an able and highly esteemed minister of the Presbyterian church, had for several years held and taught substantially the same religious views as those presented in the foregoing pages. And some three years ago, he was reported to have been charged by "Common Fame,"

"1st. With denying the doctrine of the atonement as taught in our [Presbyterian] standards.

"2d. With denying the doctrine of the Trinity as taught in the standards of our church.

"3d. With discouraging the circulation of the Shorter Catechism in the Sabbath-school and among his people; and

"4th. With circulating and encouraging the circulation of books and tracts and other writings teaching the doctrines of Swedenborg."

Accordingly a committee of three (two ministers and one elder) was appointed to investigate these charges. And not long after, Mr. White was “cited to appear before the Presbytery of Huntingdon,” (Pa.)—September 4th, 1883—“to answer to the [above] charges of Common Fame.” He responded to the summons, and was tried for heresy—the trial lasting three days—a full and verbatim report of which was soon after published and is now before me. From the closing speech (13 octavo pages) that Mr. White was allowed to make before Presbytery, which was admirable throughout, and revealed with great clearness the upright, noble, and truly Christian spirit of the accused, I make the following extracts:

“I look back—and you will pardon me for the personal references which I must make, because this whole trial has had reference to myself and the views I hold—I look back over my life, and see that I have come to the point where I stand to-day, not so much by any sudden overturning in my religious feelings or convictions, as by a growth—a life-long development.

“In my early years, it was my privilege to live in a Christian home in connection with the Presbyterian church, to have a Christian mother, and to be taught to say ‘Our Father which art in heaven.’ I committed thoroughly to memory the Shorter Catechism. I attended a Presbyterian Sabbath-school. I heard only a Presbyterian ministry. I do not know that I ever was inside any other than a Presbyterian church until I was

seventeen or eighteen years of age. I assumed at the beginning, in a quiet, easy way, without thinking about it, that everything in the Catechism and Confession of Faith was perfectly true. With this same complacent assumption, I went to the Theological Seminary. I do not know that, during the three years I spent in that institution, I ever thought of sitting in judgment, or forming any opinions for myself on doctrinal points. I felt that all I had to do was to sit and receive, as a tub takes in everything which comes from the spout, and then go out and preach it.

“This is one side. I had that schooling. I do not regret it.

“I see, however, that from childhood I had a different schooling. I had memorized a definition of sin; but I did not think much about its significance. But in my early years I found myself doing things which my own conscience condemned, and which I saw the Word of God condemned. I thus received a lesson about sin which made me think, and brought it home to my own heart. I learned other lessons in the same way. I tried to give up overt, sinful acts. I formed resolutions to give them up, and then found myself drifting away again, like a reed on the current, into the old way which I had so solemnly made up my mind to abandon.

“Thus I began to learn the truth about human depravity and helplessness. This led me to Christ, where I began to learn something of his grace. I went away many a time, when about ten or twelve or fourteen years of age—away among the bushes, into the fields or into the woods, to pray and sing; and I often experienced at such times such a sense

of the Saviour's love, as kept me weeping there for joy. I was learning, as I could not get it from books, the truth about a Saviour's love, and a Saviour's forgiving grace.

"In these hours of rejoicing there was not a cloud on my mind; heaven seemed near, and it appeared but a little way to the better land. I had no doubt at such times, if I were called to go, that I would find my place among the redeemed. At other times I had such a sense of darkness, coldness, apathy, and my own great sinfulness, that I doubted whether I ever knew anything of a Saviour's redeeming grace. I had sometimes confidence and joy, and sometimes doubt and trouble."

And after a brief history of the leadings and dealings of Providence with him, his struggles with traditional errors and hereditary evils, and his development and growth in spiritual life, he concludes as follows:—

"But I had another lesson in the school of experience to which I must refer in conclusion.

"After I learned the fact of a redeemed human nature, I was so taken up with Christ and the revelation of the infinite riches of his grace, that I had neither time nor heart for the study of systematic theology. I supposed that what was contained in the Confession of Faith, and so fully presented in Dr. Hodge's Theology, was true; but it seemed to be so far away from the heart and need of the church and the world, that I felt no particular interest in it. If I did turn at any time to these books, I received so little spiritual food from them, that I soon laid them down.

“But one day—I do not remember where nor when, perhaps nearly ten years ago, I remember it well—there came to me, as in a flash, what will take some minutes to tell. It was this: I saw that I had been born and raised a Presbyterian; that in my childhood I had assumed, in a quiet, easy way, without reflection, that my parents and church were right in their beliefs; that with this assumption I had started out and studied, learned, and preached until that hour. What I had learned of doctrine from my parents and church might be true, or it might not. At least, so far as I was concerned, it was only a traditional faith. I saw that if I had been born and trained in some other church I would have been something else, a Methodist, a Baptist, a Quaker, a Roman Catholic, or a Mohammedan for the same reason that I was a Presbyterian, because I had been born and trained in that faith. This discovery did not trouble me; because all that was precious to me, all I had learned in the school of Christ and from his Word remained, and I knew it to be true, and beyond doubt forever.

“As to these doctrines [which I had learned from my parents, from the Catechism, and at the Presbyterian Theological School], I felt assured that if I was in error, I might and would yet learn and receive the truth. I saw two ways open to me; the one was to assume, as I had done in the beginning, that what my church believed was the truth, and then confirm myself in it more and more by argument drawn from reason and revelation, and then preach it and die and go to the judgment to discover whether I was in truth or error. I saw some attractions in this way. It would leave me

undisturbed in my ecclesiastical relations. I would be reputed orthodox. My earthly support and that of my family would be assured as long as I was able to preach; and the best places in the church would be open to me.

“ The other way was, to go to Christ as the Great Teacher, and give myself up to Him to be led into all truth, that He might give me the desire to know and the eyes to see the truth, in his Providence bring it before me, make me honest in the reception of it, and give me courage to proclaim it to others. I saw that this way had some drawbacks. It might lead me into reputed error, and bring me into worldly straits. I might become unpopular, be regarded with suspicion, lose caste in the church, and with it my place and support. I might be tried for heresy and condemned, and the multitude might cry out, ‘away with him.’

“ But with these two ways open before me, and all that was involved on the one side and on the other, in full view as it is this hour, I did not hesitate one moment; but I instantly bowed, and laid my creed and all I had learned from men at my Saviour’s feet, and said: ‘Lord, I am thine; take me, lead me, teach me the truth, and make me faithful unto death.’ Since that day I can call no man master on earth. One is my master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Before that, when I heard and read, it was with the assumption that a certain system of doctrine was true. But after that, it was a man who desired to know the truth, and was willing to learn from any person; but could receive nothing until he saw it for himself.

“ There was no sudden clearing up in my views on any subject; but little by little I found my

mind going out on one thing and another in quest of truth. Sometimes it was months after a question was raised before it came to a full settlement, as it sooner or later did. Thus many things came up without any effort on my part, and were reviewed and settled, until I had gone over nearly the entire field of systematic theology. On review, I found that I had not a bundle of disconnected beliefs, but a closely jointed and well arranged system of truth, in perfect harmony with all the facts of Christian consciousness and experience, with all natural and spiritual laws, and with all the teachings of the Word of God: a system which exalts the Lord, justifies his ways to man, and magnifies his grace and truth, and man's everlasting dependence for all things upon his adorable Name.

“I am glad I ever came to Christ; came to Him in my guilt for pardon; came to Him in my depravity and helplessness for a redeemed nature; came to Him in my ignorance for instruction. While I have learned much, yet I feel that all I have learned is as nothing compared with the infinite things I do not know; and I rejoice in the belief that in a Saviour’s Love and Wisdom I shall advance forever.

“Some of the results of my investigations I have summed up in the statement which I read before Presbytery to-day. Without entering upon any argument in defence of these views, I leave my case, Fathers and Brethren, in your hands. I have brotherly love for you all; and I believe you reciprocate that feeling. But much as I love you, and much as I enjoy being associated with you in ministerial fellowship, since I stand here as I do

to-day, I greatly prefer to go out—if it must come to that—where I will be perfectly free to follow the Lord alone, and to preach according to the enlightenment He gives me, rather than remain in the church to be regarded with suspicion, to be called in question for following Christ in the only way I can, and to be regarded as unfaithful while I give due heed to my ordination vows ‘to maintain the truths of the Gospel, and the purity and peace of the church, whatever opposition or persecution may arise to me on that account.’

“It has been intimated that we are in the morning of a New Age. I fondly hope and believe that this is true: An age of greater light and freedom—an age of progress in everything which relates to human well-being in this world or the world to come. The kingdom of God will yet come among men on earth—the kingdom of righteousness and peace and universal brotherhood among men. This will be accomplished when all men have learned the depth of their own sinfulness, and have learned to receive, and to live from, that redeemed and divinely human nature which is offered them in Christ. To be co-workers with God, agents actuated by his Spirit, in hastening on that day of liberty, light and love among men, is our highest privilege on earth; and whatever self-sacrifice it requires, it should be our meat and drink—the very joy of our lives.

“And now, Fathers and Brethren, if you, sitting in judgment on the views I have expressed, think that I should no longer remain in the ministry of the Presbyterian church, I desire you to take the responsibility, and say so without hesitancy. And however much I may think you have erred, I will

not entertain any ill-will against you on that account. In case you think that I should not remain, I will go, as Abraham did, when he went out not knowing whither he went. I will go out without a doubt or fear—go out in entire confidence that the Lord who has led me through all the years gone by, will lead me safely to my journey's end.

“Oh! that the day may speedily come, when God's people will be one. Oh! that the day may speedily come, when all contentions and strife among men shall cease; when differences of opinion shall disappear; or, if they do not disappear, when men shall have charity to bear with each other in love, and dwell together as brethren in the ONE church of Christ. But come what will, looking to the Lord Jesus for the spirit of consecration, I give myself to Him, and consecrate what is left of life to proclaiming the Gospel of the grace of God to all men.”

At the conclusion of the trial, it was resolved, as the report before me says,

“That Presbytery having found, after a full trial, that the views held and taught by the Rev. J. W. White are contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian church, at his own request, he be permitted to withdraw from the ministry of the Presbyterian church.”

On the adoption of this resolution, Mr. White asked leave to withdraw from the ministry of that church; and the request being granted, his name was dropped from the roll of Presbytery. Afterwards the following resolution was offered, and

after many expressions by the brethren of fraternal regard for Mr. White, was unanimously passed by Presbytery :—

“That, in complying with this request, the Presbytery desire to place on record their high appreciation of the Christian character of Mr. White, and their entire confidence in his personal piety.”

And so it has come to be a matter of record, that a man thoroughly trained for the Christian ministry, may possess a “Christian character” of an exalted type, and “his personal piety” be worthy of “entire confidence,” and yet be deemed unfit to preach in a Presbyterian church. And *this* is thought to be “evangelical!” And the Presbyterian church claims to be a *Christian* church!



IS THE NEW CHURCH EVANGELICAL?*

BY REV. JULIAN K. SMYTH.

“Is the New Church Evangelical?” If for my subject I may not claim that it is of vital importance, it may at least be imagined that, to those who claim to be of the Church, it has a deep, an almost tender interest. If one may acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as his God and Saviour, if one may try to take up his cross and follow in his footsteps, if one may believe the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, loving the Gospels and the Life they reveal, never doubting them, clinging to them, teaching them diligently to his children—if, in a word, one may try to make his faith and life essentially Christian, only to have the Church which has taught and ministered to him so misunderstood, so misrepresented, as to be

* [Copied, with the author's permission, from *The New Jerusalem Magazine* for January, 1887.

Mr. Smyth is a duly accredited minister of the New Church, has been teaching its doctrines for eight or ten years, and is now the pastor of one of its most flourishing societies. What he says on the subject here treated, may therefore be accepted as the verdict of the entire body of professed Newchurchmen, or of all intelligent readers and receivers of the doctrines of this Church.—ED.]

loosely classed as “mystical,” “spiritualistic,” “rationalistic,” then, surely, it were not amiss that we should press this question upon the attention of the world. It matters not that Newchurchmen should be spoken of in terms of respect and even flattery. It is the Church, the mother of our souls, whom God has commanded us to honor, and from whose breasts we have drawn consolation; the Church which sets before us but one Lord, which guards his Word, which reveres his sacraments, that is dishonored.

But precisely because our subject is one which does strike home, we need the more care to speak temperately, justly, and, above all, in the spirit of Christian forbearance and charity. Every Christian is exposed to the temptation to which even John once yielded, when he came to the Lord and said,—thinking, evidently, that he had done Him a service: “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.” But Jesus said, “Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is, on our part.”

Now I think that the surest safeguard against religious intolerance, is to see the relation of the special truth which we entertain to the Infinite Truth itself. All truth is related to God as its

source. All revelations are the Divine manifestations of that Truth, that Word, that creative Logos which was in the beginning with God and which was God. All religions, therefore, express in more or less perfect forms, the truths of the Infinite One, which are ever trying to shape themselves, and, as it were, give birth to themselves in the most ignorant minds. Our great mistake consists in imagining that religions create truth. And with this delusion comes narrowness, intolerance. "This is my truth," Churches say, "and mine only. God has given me an exclusive right to it!" As if with our little fingers we could thus localize the kingdom of heaven! Or as if the Lord had never said, "I am the light of the world!" Christianity itself suffers from such narrowness. For it seems to me that we can only appreciate its essential grandeur and feel its truthfulness when we think of it as the clear and perfect revelation of that Word or Truth which was in the beginning, and which in a thousand strange, imperfect forms has been trying to express itself through the symbols and mythologies of older religions.

The founder of the Christian religion said that He was come to fulfill all righteousness, and thus He became universal in his character. "Before Abraham was," He said, "I am." Do we say, then, that He created the truth of love to the neighbor, or of immortality, at the time of his

personal coming, and that we should look up to Him gratefully and with perfect faith, because, as it were, He made these truths for us Christians, while unnumbered generations were forced to grope in the darkness? Shall the Christian say: "I should believe the law of love because no other religion ever heard of it before?" No, my brethren, this is false in principle and false in fact. Before Abraham? Aye, back to the very centre and source of all creation, the Saviour of men traced his divine lineage. "In the beginning was the Word." And so much of the truth as man could understand to his good, be he Oriental or Occidental, has always been revealed. Revealed, not created. Brought to light, made plain to the eye, and not newly constructed. So that the history of the Churches is a history of the successive revelations of truth whose antiquity is lost in the being and eternity of God. Churches are new in the sense that they are enabled to see and announce new unveilings of God's truth.

So with regard to the New Church. The Church is new—not in the sense that it is a substitute for Christianity; something in advance of the religion established by our Lord—but new in its understanding of what the teachings of the Lord really are. The system of truth we hold, claims to open up the Word of God in its genuine, primitive, Divine meaning. The interpretation may be new,

but the truth itself—the eternal Logos which it discloses—stretches away back to God.

Always, I believe religion to have descended a heavenly gift—a gift which men once possessed in its beauty. But in time they marred and disfigured it. They distorted and perverted it until “its beauty became stained, and its strength became weakness, and its life decayed, and its words no longer had power to save.” Darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people. But slowly, patiently God laid the way for a new and more perfect manifestation of Himself to man. A Scripture was given which, plainly, or under symbols, should be the expression of God’s thought and will to man—should set forth hopes to which men are still clinging, should speak the word of consolation for the mourners of all ages, but, more than all, reveal the figure of the Lord, so full of love, of brightness, of spiritual majesty,—Him who, in his perfect humanity, stood calmly before the world and said, “I am the Truth.” What ages had been preparing for, what religions had been reaching out for, is come at last! The world’s Comforter, its Truth, its Life is here! In Him, as in no prophet, no saint, no reformer, the Divine and the Human are so fully met, so exquisitely blended, so perfectly related to all that we can do or suffer, that we can only fall at his feet and cry, “My Lord and my God.”

And here, as if at his feet, I put my question: "Is the New Church evangelical?" For years a large portion of the Christian world has said, "No!" It has said your doctrines are fanciful, contrary to the received standards, and therefore you are not evangelical. I would not wrest this title from any Church, were I able to do so. Would to God we were all truly evangelical! For what is an evangelical Church? What does this word "evangelical" mean? Our lexicons say: "Relating to the Gospel; agreeable to the Gospel." The definition is simple. An evangelical Church is one whose teachings and whose life are in agreement with the Gospel. In this definition I have added the important factor of a true life. You know the authority for this; for our Lord said: "If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed." What definition could be simpler, truer, more comprehensive? "If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Nor is this the only passage of the kind. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." To be "evangelical" means simply to believe and live according to the Gospel. It is a spiritual requisite; and God, not man, nor even Church councils, must

pass upon that. For I hold that whoever looks to the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and, to the best of his understanding, applies the teachings of the Gospels to his life, is a Christian and a disciple wherever he be, or whatever his name.

And who, we may justly ask, has abolished the law of discipleship of our Lord? By whose authority is a portion of the Christian Church named "evangelical," while the rest must bear the stigma of being "dissenters," "non-conformists," "heretics" ["non-evangelical"], and the like?

What, then, has become of the peace and purity of the early Church? They deemed it honor enough to be followers of the Lord Jesus; and all who confessed his name were, in their eyes, brethren—yes, brethren, with whom they shared what goods Providence had given them, and with whom they labored day and night for the one cause that was near to their hearts. But how changed now is the condition of the Church? Paul had written: "I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;" but a change came when the Church was converted from a spiritual into a civil power. For then ambition, greed, falsities, and iniquities invaded its walls

and thrust out charity, without which genuine faith can never endure.

And since that day the Church has rung with anathemas and with the voices of angry disputants, and even now is not without its enmities. A certain ecclesiastical authority and supremacy, based upon disputed historical grounds, rather than upon spiritual fitness, has been urged. By appellation, Christian communities are divided into those who are "evangelical" and those who are not. The Lord's simple rule of Christian discipleship has been substituted by another so essentially different that between the two there is no real connection. For, says our lexicon again: "This word [evangelical], which means simply appertaining to or characteristic of the Gospel, has been applied to a portion of the Church who either profess or are supposed to know and inculcate the Gospel in an especial manner, and to give peculiar prominence to the doctrine of salvation by faith in the atonement. The title of evangelical seems to have undergone some change in its meaning from that which it bore when it was first used; and is now not unfrequently adopted as synonymous with Calvinist." Brethren, I am not here to attack the beliefs of any man or Church; but, in the name of the Christian religion, I ask by whose authority was such a qualification ever substituted for the law of Jesus Christ?

A little more than one hundred years ago, while Romanism and Protestantism were still panting from the struggle of the Reformation, a voice might have been heard speaking calmly to the world. Unnoticed, almost unheard, it sounded on. There was no bitterness in its tone. Whilst Romanism was anathematizing the unbeliever, and Protestantism was preaching a God of vengeance, who would condemn every soul that was not justified by faith, this new voice declared as its central doctrine that God was love,—infinite, absolute love,—abounding in mercy for the sinner and the unbeliever; and that a good life, guided by faith, was the test of true discipleship. Slowly, peacefully, but few noticing it, this doctrine began to unfold itself. It solved the mystery of the Trinity by declaring Jesus Christ to have been the manifestation of God in a human form and nature like our own, who redeemed mankind “in his love and in his pity” by enduring the temptations which assail us, overcoming them, and so subduing the demoniac world and setting men free. It opened the Scriptures as once the Lord had opened them to his disciples, showing their hidden glories, and establishing their Divinity upon a new and enduring basis. It told of the future life, explained some of the laws which govern there; showed that man is essentially a spiritual being, endowed with a spiritual body; that death is but

the removal of his physical part, and that the life after death is real, thrilling, earnest. It enjoined charity to all men, fealty to the Lord, and a life of devoted usefulness. And this same voice went on to say that an era of golden liberty was dawning upon the world, and that in this unveiling of the Word of God, with its revelation of numberless truths, the Lord was coming to the souls of men in power and great glory.

I speak of this revelation as a voice. And yet it was not the voice of a preacher, ringing out like that of John the Baptist; employing no eloquence like that of Chrysostom the "golden-mouthed;" resorting to no impassioned pleas like those of Whitefield or Massillon. It was the voice of the truth, which has sounded from time to time through the world's ages, finding utterance through the well-trained mind of a calm, sober Christian. No terrifying cry of lo! here, or lo! there. Books were the evangelists, human hearts the temple. It was as if God had said, "Let there be light," and after years of cloud and night, the Word of the Lord—the creative Logos, the great Sun of righteousness—had once more come forth with healing in his wings.

Concerning this New Church, I should like to show, did time permit, how it does not aim to become a mere sect among sects, much less to supersede Christianity, but that its mission is to

set forth primitive Christianity in newness and fullness, and to lay before the thoughtful consideration of men a system of doctrine and of Bible interpretation which, to our eyes at least, has transfigured the teachings of [last century's] religion. But, while this cannot now be undertaken, I may at least be permitted to consider some misconceptions concerning the New Church which tend to limit its full usefulness, deterring many from giving it that candid examination which it deserves, and which has rarely failed to amply reward the inquirer.

Through some cause, I know not what, there is a common impression that the New Church does not hold firmly to the vital truths of Christianity; that we have rejected its corner-stone, and are trying to build upon another. We do not complain of open assault so much as of those misapprehensions and insinuations which have led many conscientious persons to regard the New Church as indifferent to the essentials of religion, and have even caused them to believe that while we have many beautiful doctrines,—as concerning death and the future life,—nevertheless, that our whole system is fanciful; that it rests only upon the word of Swedenborg, and that in this religion the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible are either slighted or denied. Amazing charge to bring against a Church which worships Jesus Christ as God!

Strange accusation to urge against a religious body which now, in the hour when so many are recanting their faith in the plenary inspiration of the Scripture which is being assaulted as never before, proclaims, as it has always proclaimed, its unfaltering belief in its Divinity! Oh, it is time that the world knew the Church better than it knows it now. It is time that men of other creeds, and of no creed, should recognize in the New Church a strong ally of the religion of the Saviour. I do not presume to ask that all shall see the claims or the teachings of this Church as we see them; but now, in these days of religious perplexity, when former beliefs seem passing away, and when there is such need for unity, I speak for fairness of judgment and an honest examination of those truths which many have found an unfailing source of strength and consolation. It is not for me to speak of the life of the Church. I make no boast of spiritual faithfulness. Yet I can affirm that these teachings, instead of being mere vagaries, as many suppose, are practical to a degree; that they insist at every turn upon charity to the neighbor; urge use and honest living as the only test worthy of religion; enjoin us to be devout, believing men, and bring us as suppliants to the Lord Jesus Christ as the one and only Object of our adoration.

For the orthodoxy of this religion I plead. You

cannot judge of its life by the pulse of another. You will never do it justice if you approach it from a mere curiosity to hear its declarations concerning the future world and life. These are but the sky of the picture, radiant and deep; but under this sweep of blue lies the valley of life, with its human beings throbbing with hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, pains and temptations. To these the Church appeals and ministers. The New Church aims to be essentially Christian. She re-affirms the teachings of our Lord, presents his life as the only real life to follow, and acknowledges his providence in every event that befalls us.

As for the evangelicism of the Church, what more can I say than that every doctrine she puts forth is based upon what she believes to be the teachings of the Word of God? More than this cannot be asked of any religion. Examine these teachings in the light, not of creeds of man's making, but of the Word of God. Evidently it would be impossible to institute such an examination in a complete form in the few moments that remain to me. The New Church, however, insists upon three things as essential to a true Christian faith: the divinity of the Lord, the divinity and inspiration of the Scriptures, and a good life. These we may briefly examine.

Of the Lord we not only declare Him to be the perfect embodiment of infinite love and wisdom,

the Head of the Church, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” but we declare Him to be God himself, made manifest to men through the assumption of a human nature like our own, that He might “bow the heavens and come down,” redeem men from spiritual bondage and become man’s Saviour, who, in his glorified humanity, is God over all, yet immanent “in all the experiences of human life.” The Father is in the Son, as man’s soul is within his body; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father by the Son, as man’s power proceeds into act from his soul by means of his body. The Divine Trinity in the Lord is of the same nature as the finite trinity in man; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being one Lord in one person, as the soul, the body, and the life of man are one man. Is this contrary to the Gospels? or is this confession of the Deity of Christ and the unity of God in harmony with his own declarations: “I and the Father are one;” “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;” “Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” What Church can take higher ground than this? Is not this making the Lord the all in all? “The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last?” Nay, will any Church that calls itself “evangelical” affirm as absolutely the Deity of Christ?

We believe the Scriptures to be a full and per-

fect revelation of our duties to God and man. We believe that within its histories, prophecies, its laws and injunctions, are contained yet higher planes of meaning, which are the expression of God's love and wisdom, and which are all symbolized in the letter. This does not imply that we deny the outward or literal sense in which the Word is given to us, any more than a belief in the soul implies a rejection of the body within which it is contained. On the contrary, this inner spiritual sense gives to the letter a new value and a higher authority, distinguishing it from every other book on earth, and filling it with a grace and uplifting power which millions have felt and do still feel, and which are in exact corroboration of what the Lord said: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Contrasted with the growing timidity in almost every Church, to heartily confess the plenary inspiration of Scripture, does this doctrine of the New Church seem loose or heretical?

A true Christian life we believe to be a life of faith and charity. We are enjoined to resist evils as sins against God; to do good in the acknowledgment that all the merit belongs to Him; to love our Lord above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. The duties of prayer and repentance, the sanctity of the sacraments, are all emphasized with solemn earnestness, and leave no

room for the insinuation that the New Church is indifferent to the exercises of true religion.

Is, then, the New Church evangelical? Must it ever remain suspected of ignoring the Gospels? Shall our Christian neighbors continue to think of it as a mere "ism" in the great world of religion, and be content to form their judgment from current rumors as trifling and absurd, many of them, as they are current? The day for mere personal vituperation or contempt has gone by. But the time still is, when many pass lightly over our faith for no better reason than that we are thought to be "mystics," "spiritists," and the like. We are thought to have brought new and strange gods within our temples. "They discard the Bible," says one; "they deny the Divinity of Christ," says another; "they worship Swedenborg," claims a third. Well, brethren, these things are hard to bear—not so much because they place us in a false position, as because they reduce the influence of the Church.

The world is reaching out, as never before, for a knowable, personal God. The most reverent minds are trying to behold God in Christ. Everywhere I believe there are traces of a growing reaction against the skepticism of the present and of the last centuries. Pantheism has been tried, but has been found too cold and impersonal. Materialism has been tried, but proved repulsive. De-

structive criticism has laid siege to the Gospels, but somehow the Gospels stand. We have had our "mythical theories," which would fain have reduced Christ to the cold, sweet image of a dream; but if there is one fact in the history of the world which stands unshaken, one fact which seems to fairly challenge the reverence of men, it is the real personality of Christ. And now what seems so hard is, that with this return, as one may say, to the adoration of the Saviour, the Church which from the beginning has preached God in Christ and maintained Him as the sole Object of its worship, should be so misunderstood as actually to be suspected of denying Him and his Gospels!

Still, we are not to falter. A wisdom greater than ours directs the ways of men. A love deeper than ours yearns for them. If the house be worthy, God's peace will rest upon it. The Church is in the world, that she may do her share in the work of saving souls. With her, as with every Church, this work is slow. Only by degrees does the heart yield to the demands of truth; only by degrees does it turn away from the sorcery of the world to the kingdom of the Lord; only by degrees does the Church save a single life, and with its evils bound, its virtues free, lead it to the feet of the Master.

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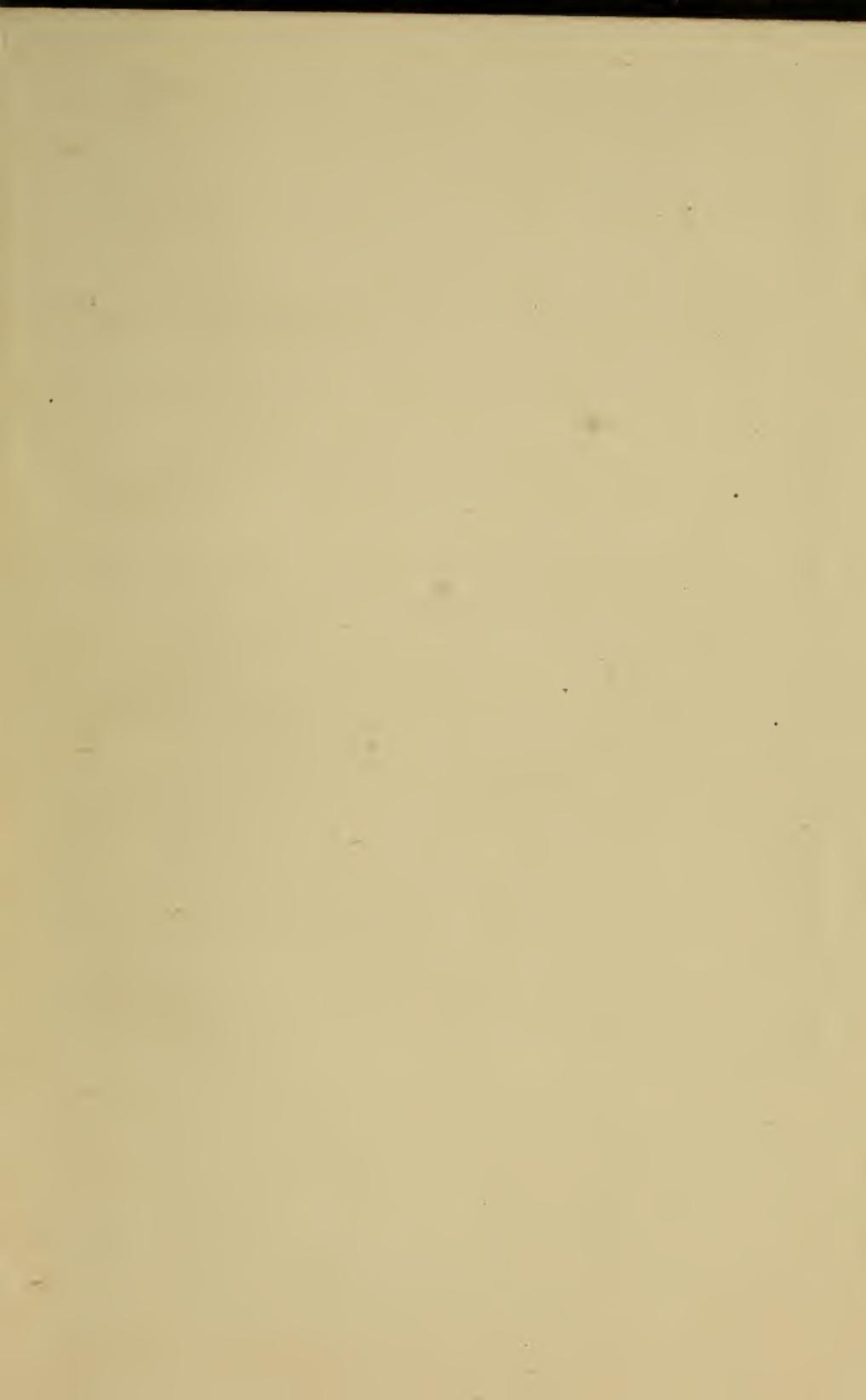
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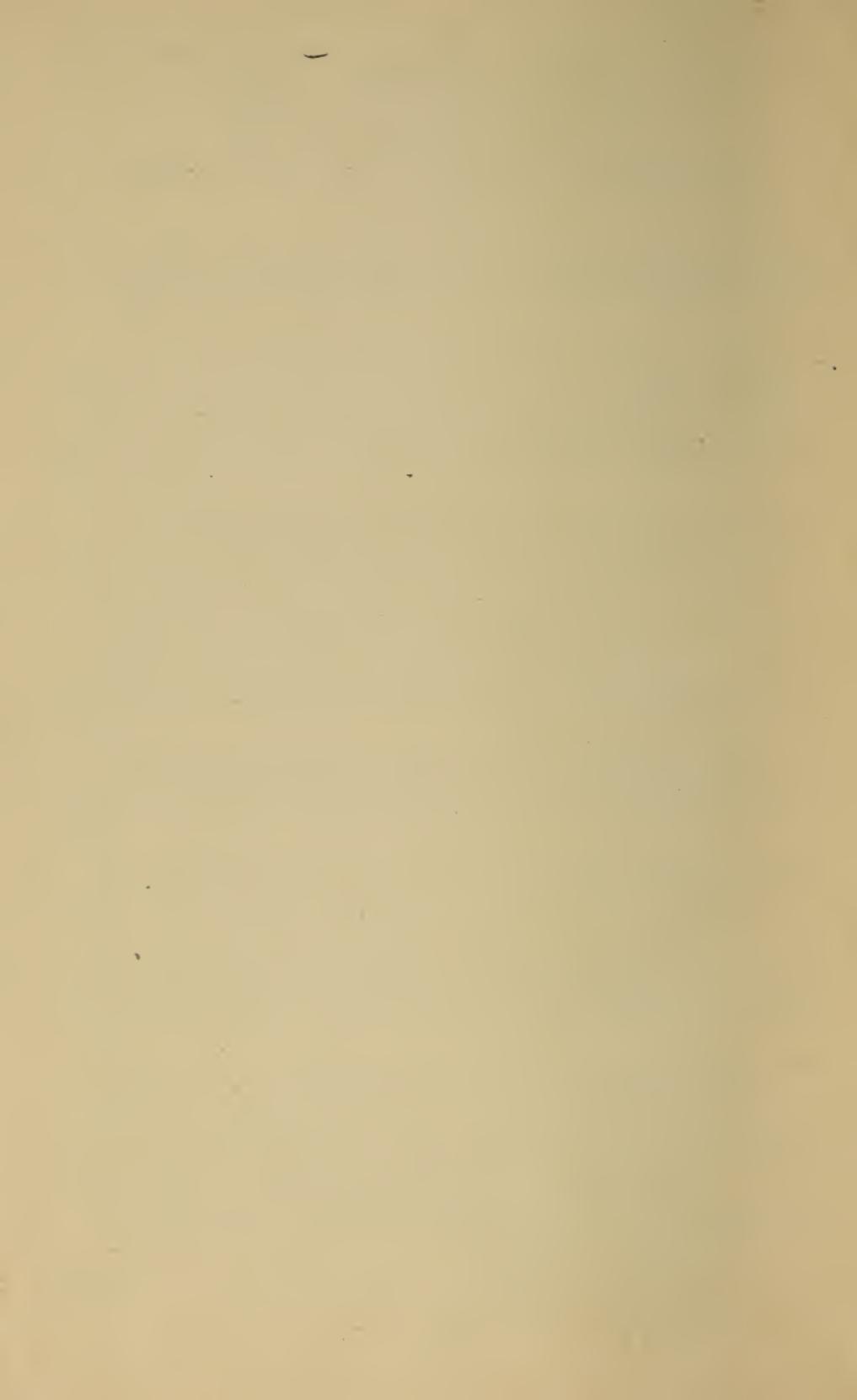
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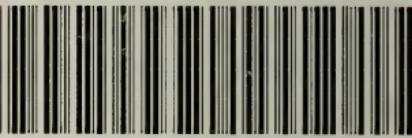
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